













*From Scharf & Westcott's "History of Philadelphia."*

THE HOUSE IN WHICH THOMAS JEFFERSON WROTE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776.

The house No. 230 High street, afterwards No. 700 Market street, and located on the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, Philadelphia, in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, in June, 1776.

APR 1 1898

The House  
in which  
Thomas Jefferson  
wrote the  
Declaration of  
Independence

BY

THOMAS DONALDSON

(1)

PRIVATELY  
PRINTED

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

1898

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To the memory of an old friend,

EDWARD T. STEEL,

who long since went to his rest, after showing in his life and  
by his work that he was in all things

AN AMERICAN.



# PREFACE.

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THIS book is the requiem of a most historic and sacred house, for within its walls Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and thus dedicated it to earthly immortality—on the pages of the art preservative ; but this was not sufficient to save it in the substance.

This house stood one hundred and eight years—beyond the period when was fixed by law and at a fearful cost of patriotic life and treasure, the mighty thought written out within it by Mr. Jefferson, that

“ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.”

No comment upon the character or condition of the period in which it was destroyed is necessary other than to record the fact that it was torn down to make way for trade and commerce.



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# Thomas Jefferson—The Man. His Public Life and Acts and His Private Life and Character.

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## His Birth and Death.

Thomas Jefferson was born at Shadwell, Albermarle County, Va., April 13, 1743. On his tomb at Monticello is, "born April 2d, 1743, O. S."\*

He died at Monticello, near Charlottesville, Va., at about one o'clock p. m., July 4, 1826, at more than eighty-three years of age.

On the same day John Adams, ex-President, a member of the Continental Congress, and a colleague on the Committee to report the Declaration of Independence, fifty years before, died at Quincy, Mass., aged ninety-one years. His last words were "Thomas Jefferson still survives."

James Monroe, an ex-President, also died on a fourth of July.

Mr. Jefferson wrote the epitaph for his own tombstone. For many years his grave was neglected and the original tombstone was finally destroyed by relic hunters and the elements. In the eighties, Congress ordered a monument erected over his grave, and this,

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\* Mr. Jefferson was a graduate of William and Mary College, Virginia. He read law with George Wythe, at Williamsburgh, Va. John Marshall and Henry Clay were also pupils of Mr. Wythe. He practiced law successfully, but chiefly as a counsellor, from 1767 to 1775. He married Martha Skelton, a rich and childless young widow, in 1772; she died in 1782, leaving three daughters living of the six children that she bore him.

including an iron fence about the grave lot, was duly placed in position under the direction of General Thomas L. Casey, of the Engineer Department, U. S. A.

The inscription on the monument is:

“HERE WAS BURIED  
THOMAS JEFFERSON,  
AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF AMERICAN  
INDEPENDENCE—OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA  
FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,  
AND  
FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.”

On the gate is:

“AB EO LIBERTAS,  
A QUO SPIRITUS.”

The government seems to have added this.

Mr. Jefferson's best monument is the fact that mankind recognizes him as a statesman, a patriot, a scholar, and a benefactor.



THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Aged 33 years, and at the time he wrote the Declaration of Independence.



## Mr. Jefferson's Chief Public Positions. .

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Member of House of Burgesses, Virginia, several times.

Member of the Continental Congress.

Member of Congress after the Declaration was adopted.

Governor of Virginia.

Minister to France.

Secretary of State, United States, during President Washington's first term.

Vice-President of the United States, with President John Adams.

President of the United States, two terms, from 1801 to 1809.

He took public office at twenty-six years of age, in 1769.

He retired from public life at sixty-five years of age, in 1809. In public life for forty years.

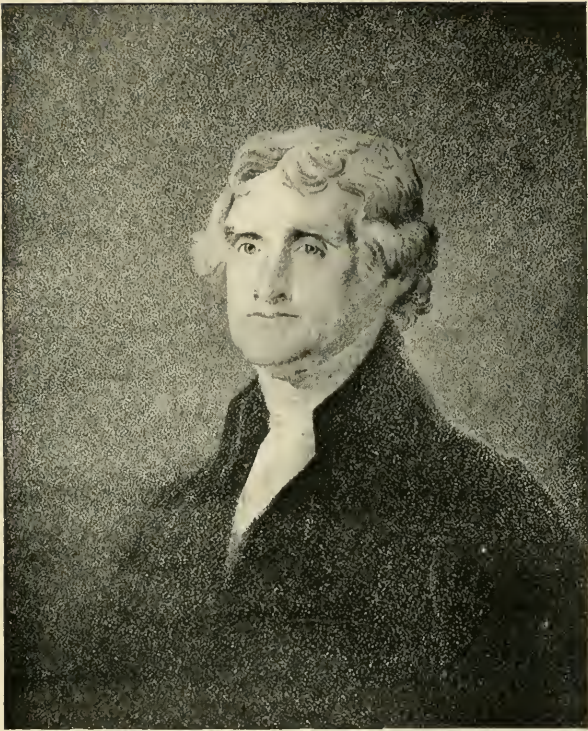
He entered public life rich. Died very poor.

Mr. Jefferson has received recognition for his public services in the naming of eight of our cities and towns, twenty-three counties and one hundred and forty townships for him, besides many post-offices. Several colleges, schools and institutions have also honored him. His name is a favorite one for children, for associations, for military and fire companies, for steamboats and other public conveyances.

Mr. Jefferson, while living in the laws, literature and liberty of this Republic has not been a favorite subject for the sculptor's art. He was foremost in the breach in the battle for our liberty, and

is among the last to receive a national monument. There is a bronze, full figure of him, by "David of Angers," in the Capitol at Washington,—a superb piece of art. It at one time stood in the grounds in front of the White House. It came to the government through Commodore U. P. Levy, U. S. N., who purchased Monticello, Mr. Jefferson's home, and whose heirs now own it.

Mr. Jefferson, while Vice-President, was the author of "Jefferson's Manual of Parliamentary Proceedings"—an invaluable work—and still in use.



*Gilbert Stuart Pixl.*

THOMAS JEFFERSON.  
Aged 53.





## Mr. Jefferson's Chief Public Acts.

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Before 1767, in Virginia, he began to agitate against the misrule of King George, and joined Patrick Henry, George Wythe and others in determined opposition to tyranny.

He advocated common schools and the abolishment of slavery.

He caused the passage of a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into Virginia.

With George Wythe and James Madison in the Virginia Legislature, after September, 1776, he spent three years in revising and adapting the laws of Virginia to the new conditions under liberty.

He drew and caused to be enacted the statute for religious liberty in Virginia, the first one ever enacted by a legislature and the first by any government.

He suggested the dollar as a unit of value.

He was largely responsible for the location of the capital at Washington.

In Congress in 1783-84, he voted to ratify the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain—settling the war his Declaration of Independence had helped make—and presented to Congress the Virginia deed of cession of her lands,

northwest of the river Ohio, to the United States for public domain.

March 1, 1784, in Congress, he reported from a committee, and all in his handwriting, a plan for the temporary government of the Northwestern Territory, with a clause prohibiting slavery therein. This plan became the basis and was, in fact, embraced in the ordinance of July 13, 1787, for the government of the territory of the United States Northwest of the river Ohio.

After he retired from public life in 1809, he founded the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Va., was its Rector, and devoted his remaining years to its development.

In 1821 Mr. Jefferson wrote: "I have sometimes asked myself whether my country is the better for my having lived at all. I do not know that it is. I have been the instrument of doing the following things; but they would have been done by others, some of them, perhaps, a little better."

Then follows his account of what he did. Abridged they are:

He improved the navigation of the Rivanna River.

He wrote the Declaration of Independence.

He disestablished the established church in Virginia and secured the freedom of religion.

He was the father of the act putting an end to entails; and, as noted, of the act prohibiting the importation of slaves;

Of the act concerning citizens, and establishing the natural right of man to expatriate himself at will;

Of the act changing the course of descents, and giving the inheritance to all the children, etc., equally, and

Of the act for apportioning crimes and punishments.

The above, except the first two, related to Virginia, but their principles were adopted over the entire Union.

Mr. Jefferson notes that he introduced the olive tree or plant into South Carolina, from France, in 1789-90, and brought upland rice into South Carolina from Africa in 1790.

Mr. Jefferson's memoranda end with the above. He evidently contemplated finishing them, but never did.

It will be observed that he makes no mention of his services in Congress, or his acts while President, and does not mention his having founded the University of Virginia. He was a modest man in respect to his public acts.

While President, he purchased the Province of Louisiana from France in 1803.

He sent Lewis and Clark and Pike to explore the western country.

He tried to enforce national rights by "embargo" instead of by war.

He reduced the public debt and aided trade and commerce, and provided a system of sea coast and tide water defences.



## Mr. Jefferson as President.

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Before entering on its duties he declared the Presidency to be "a splendid misery."

While President, he turned the Federalists out of office as fast as he properly could, and put Republicans, men of his own party, in their places.

He knew the danger of the insidious entrance of forms, customs, and accessories of monarchy into the life of a republic, such as titles, vulgar display; ceremonials exalting self in robes of office; and cheap clap-trap surrounding officials. He abolished useless forms in official etiquette, and observed simplicity in his official conduct. There was no class of vulgar rich in his time, such as is apparent in our day. It is to be regretted that there was not, for it is probable that he would have thrust it so hard that he would have killed it in our body politic and for all time.

Of his efforts to establish simplicity while in the Presidency, he wrote: "We have suppressed all these public forms and ceremonies which tended to familiarize the public eye to the harbinger of another form of government," *i. e.*, monarchy.

Mr. Jefferson's early conclusions as to the best form of government for the people of the United States, were that the states (lately colonies) ought to remain a league, for foreign relations and international questions, but should be separate and independent governments in domestic and internal affairs. This was about the plan adopted in the Articles of Confederation. In practice it was a monotonous failure. It was followed by the government under the Constitution. Mr. Jefferson, while President, discovered that only under a constitution, which tied a people to certain general principles, could a government only be successfully administered by liberal and equitable acts—necessity, or incident forcing the exercise of common sense to meet emergencies. He did some extraordinary things in the way of assuming powers, while President, and made some precedents for the liberal construction of the constitution still followed and enlarged upon. Mr. Jefferson held tenaciously to the idea that it was best to have the citizen unrestrained or uncontrolled, save for the general welfare. The citizen should create business and develop resources, in fact, attend to his own private business. Like most Americans, Jefferson was opposed to the government's conducting or interfering in private business; when of a quasi public nature, he believed that it should be regulated by law and not by the mere whim of officials.

Strange to note, while President, he urged internal improvements and education, which might be paid for with the surplus money from impost duties.

Before retiring from the Presidency Mr. Jefferson had also reached the conclusion that his view of the necessity, at stated times, for blood and revolution to change our rulers or policy was wrong. He had written of such necessity for revolution from France, and, moreover, when he held these views, the states were under the ill-formed confederation. He wrote, in 1805, "That should things go wrong at any time, the people will set them to rights by the peaceful exercise of their elective rights."

While President, he was absolute in command of his party and blindly followed by the people.

His second election to the Presidency—an almost unanimous one (as he received 162 electoral votes to 14 to two Federal candidates)—was due to the abuse and villifications of him by the Federalists. It vindicated him.

He retired from the Presidency in 1809, with the country at peace, and grown prosperous, and with a population of seven millions of people. Although he could have had a third term, he declined it and established the University of Virginia.

It is amazing in the present period of vast private fortunes that some rich person loving liberty and who admires Mr. Jefferson, does not endow the University of Virginia with money enough to give it life to accomplish the work Mr. Jefferson expected it would do, and which it could do if properly aided.





## Mr. Jefferson's Principles of Government.

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In Mr. Jefferson's time the nation was rural and agricultural. All the present methods of rapid transportation and interstate commerce, and the multifarious results of steam and electricity, were practically unknown; and the citizen was then more self-reliant and depended less upon Congress than now; so Jefferson and many other statesmen of his time necessarily had a narrow view of the Republic, and hoped much from the states.

The government of the United States, as designed by the Fathers and exemplified in the Constitution, and which had the Declaration of Independence for its Bill of Rights, was created for three millions of people. Still, it was and is expansive, and in more than one hundred years, we have amended it but six times. Twelve of the amendments—almost all relating to the rights of the citizen or states—were adopted during Mr. Jefferson's lifetime. The other three amendments, including that giving freedom to the slaves, grew out of the results of the War of the Rebellion.

The possibility of a large immigration does not seem to have come within the vision of the Fathers. Mr. Jeffer-

son was not well disposed towards it, and so the evils that now exist in this Republic in consequence of almost unlimited immigration were not then suspected.

Mr. Jefferson's political views have been the subject of much discussion. His state sovereignty ideas were largely a consequence of the activity of Mr. Hamilton and his followers towards a strongly centralized government. The resolutions which he drew—now famous—as to state sovereignty, or the rights of the states against the nation, are obsolete, because the War of the Rebellion crushed state sovereignty as Mr. Jefferson knew it, but preserved states rights as the Nationalists now understand them.

Mr. Jefferson wrote: "If the happiness of the mass of the people can be secured at the expense of a little tempest, now and then, or even of a little blood, it will be a precious purchase. . . . A little rebellion now and then is a good thing. . . . It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government. God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. . . . What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." This view he changed in 1805.

Mr. Jefferson's republic rested always upon "the basis of our government's (colonies) being the opinion of the people. The very first object should be to keep that

right." From his own statement Mr. Jefferson's idea of revolution was modified when he saw the Constitution in full operation, and the changes that followed. Outbreaks and riots are now numerous enough, however, to satisfy even Mr. Jefferson's longing for revolutions, and our frequent elections, following strong agitation, are our best safeguards for liberty.

Any non-essential curtailment of the liberty or the rights of persons met Mr. Jefferson's violent opposition. This spirit of opposition he breathed in the air of Virginia, and it became his second nature. And this spirit of personality and individuality permeates the South to-day, and had much to do with their part in the War of the Rebellion.

Mr. Jefferson created a party, the Republican, in our politics; Mr. Hamilton, as much as any other man, the Federalist party. Mr. Jefferson insisted on full powers in the people; the Federalists favored the delegation of the people's powers to bureau or other officers. Mr. Jefferson became the idol of the masses, and declined election for a third term. He retired while in favor with the people.

Mr. Jefferson's ideas or principles of government—the outgrowth of his zeal for the welfare of mankind—have in some instances proved inadequate or false. Still, his purpose was honest and his hopes manly. However, the basic proposition of his political creed, "All men are

created equal," though departed from in localities, is the bed-rock of the foundation of this Republic.

He has been abused, misquoted, his memory libelled, his words questioned, and some of his opinions declared fallacious; but spite of all these he is present in each second of the nation's existence, and will continue to be.

His views in the main were: All men are created equal and with certain inalienable rights; "that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

A republic whose executive enforces, whose legislature enacts, and whose courts administer law.

The rights of man are inviolable. Personal liberty, consistent with law and order, is to be rigidly maintained, and the weaker are to be always protected from the stronger.

Laws are to be made without coercion, purchase of legislators or law-making bodies, and not to be procured by undue influence. When ascertained to have been made through corruption, then there should follow immediate repeal and protest by the people.

Courts and judges thereof should be on terms with the people and their privileges.

Laws must be impartially administered.

Taxes must be evenly laid and collected.

No great standing army.

A free press.

Public meetings of the people and discussion of all public matters whenever and wherever they please.

The nation's lands should be held by its citizens, and agriculture to be fostered as the basis of wealth, comfort, and happiness.

No king, potentate, or ruler other than the people. No classes or orders of men. Arrogance, assumption, and pretension of the vulgar of whatever station must be checked.

Government is in fact necessity; wisdom meets exigencies as they arise, and promptly overcomes them.

Make homogeneous the people of the nation by promoting the general welfare.

Educate the people to govern themselves and regulate their rulers.

Education to be fostered and aided by all means possible.

A government must keep abreast of the developments of science and growth of the arts.

Economy must prevail in national expenditures, with the largest possible proper private outgo consistent with means.

The Republic ought always to be a partisan one, with frequent changes in officials after limited service, because long continuance in power by one set of men or party is, in effect, monarchy. As few officials should be created or maintained as is possible, so as not to create an office-holding class. Merit, not competition, to be the test of capacity. The man as much if not more than his acquirements.

Right of private judgment in matters of faith must be respected in all men.

Rights of property, like the rights of man, to be preserved.

Principle (that which is best for the people having been ascertained) to be pushed with vigor for the common good.

The nation's word, once given, to be sacredly preserved, and faith always kept.

Eternal and constant vigilance in maintaining liberty, with frequent elections which, while costly and wearing on a people, are absolutely essential to the maintenance of liberty.

A free field for brains, energy and manhood, and one man as good as the other.

First, last, and all the time, public opinion, the will of the people, to be supreme. Still, always law and never license, but protest to be heeded.

## Thomas Jefferson's Career.—A Review.

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No book with Thomas Jefferson's public acts or deeds as the theme, or in any wise bringing any of them into view, can be considered even fairly well done without containing some account of the man, his appearance and characteristics.

Mr. Jefferson from earliest manhood united the search for knowledge with untiring energy in its acquisition and almost ceaseless labor while in public positions. A mediocre man in talent, with his energy, would have succeeded in life.

Mr. Jefferson's reputation for having that knowledge, coupled with the force and weight of his personal character and his constant care for the personal liberty of his fellow men, were his chief claims for the affection and support of his fellow citizens.

The acts he accomplished are brave illustrations of the value and effects of a moral life in obtaining and holding the love of his fellow beings. Even the aristocratic

Virginians of his day, while despising Mr. Jefferson's political principles and suffering socially from the laws passed through his efforts, were as proud of the deeds of "our Tom Jefferson" as were other Virginians who held to him with the clutch of a set vise.

By his associates in private life and his colleagues in public life Mr. Jefferson was known as a useful man, ready with his pen and quick of thought and action.

When he came to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, in 1776, the reputation of possessing these qualities had preceded him, and the fact that he was selected by ballot, unanimously and first of the committee of five to prepare the Declaration of Independence by Congress, is an evidence of the position he held with the Fathers. When the committee met, Mr. Jefferson was requested by them to prepare the document, and he did so.

Chance played no part in selecting him to write the Declaration. He was qualified to do it from years of thought and preparation. Many of its sentences had run through his mind for years; they had been formulated while at the bar, on the hustings, in church, and some of them when he was sleeping. It was written in seventeen days. Blue pencil men of the present day might write it differently, and can criticise its construction; but, save the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments—it continues to be the most frequently read or quoted composition in this Republic.



Every line of it bears the sign manual of Thomas Jefferson—and when he sat down to write it out in Graff's house, at Seventh and Market Streets, Philadelphia, in June, 1776, he was merely putting on paper his own reflections and thoughts on the subject for a decade. Such a document could not be produced by any man without long thought and preparation. It was, in fact, finished when it was begun, and Mr. Jefferson, at about thirty-three years of age, in writing the Declaration of Independence, reached earthly immortality.

His lack of the power of public speaking was made up by a marvelous aptitude with his pen, and in the power to convey by his writings the force of personal appeal usual in impressive oratory.

That without this gift of oratory he should have reached the high station that he did in Virginia seems at this distance of time little less than a marvel. Prolific in oratory and valuing it highly as an essential in political life, a people earnest in their patriotism and vigorous in the assertion of the right of individuality—the Virginians of Jefferson's day were chiefly impressed by his character, patriotism, and his knowledge. Considering the lack of newspapers and the slow methods of securing or conveying news, the power of the orator over the people can be easily understood. The hustings and other popular meetings were then the chief places to obtain the news of the colony, state or nation. Oratory then in a public man

was almost as essential as life itself, and a public man in that time who was not a speaker was a rare exception.

Mr. Jefferson never was a speaker. Save with his pen, his friends and neighbors never called upon him to speak, because when he attempted to he blushed, hesitated, and stammered. On the contrary, in private conversation, with his low musical voice, earnestness, pleasant face, knowledge and purpose, he was one of the best and most convincing of talkers; probably no man in Virginia or in the colonies excelled him as a convincing conversationalist.

Sometimes he wrote a speech for an occasion and a friend read it for him.

When the Declaration of Independence was under fire in Congress during the debate before its adoption, Mr. Jefferson sat by never speaking a word and heard weighty John Adams, whom he denominated a "colossus," defend and explain it.

Mr. Jefferson was an ardent Democrat or Republican. This was born in him, although living as a man of high station and fine quality; he was a Republican in principle and practice. He had unbounded hope for the future of the Republic and also faith in its people. His experience and observation in Europe convinced him of the correctness of his views for the government of men, and he wrote: "With all the defects of our Constitution . . . the com-

parison of our governments with those of Europe is like a comparison of heaven and hell. England, like the earth, may be allowed to take the intermediate station." In his battle for the rights of man, he was like a steel-clad knight of old, with the unusual feature that he was a Prince Rupert fighting on Cromwell's side. He dealt death blows at the interests and privileges of the aristocratic class of which he was one by association, and never flinched in this work as a duty. He hung his armor and rested his spear when the privileged class, by law, in Virginia was unhorsed, and when the good purpose of his example in leveling arrogance over mankind had permeated the great Republic.

He made it possible for the Hebrew, the Catholic, the Dissenter, the Quaker, the Unitarian, the Orthodox, and the Unorthodox, to live in peace in Virginia, and receive the even protection and benefit of the laws.

Mr. Jefferson lived so long that he saw many changes in the government and in the personal character of our people. Still, amid all of these weaknesses and changes he never saw or heard a Senator of the United States rise up and charge a President of the United States with being a jobber and participating in illegal exactions of money from the government, and the charge aided by no Senator's attempting to deny the accusation.

Charges of improper official conduct in legislation are now more openly and frequently made than ever before

in our history and are laughed at in some quarters, as only an incident of office-holding, and elections are frequently considered commercial propositions.

High officials call their fellows robbers and jobbers and political thugs, and it is stated and believed that laws are unblushingly passed at the behest of interests inimical to the welfare of the people. These things are no fault of the plans laid down for government by the Fathers. They are merely the idiosyncrasies or habits of wretches by nature, walking in the covering of men, found in all nations and whose open crimes generally overreach and recoil upon themselves. These debauched creatures will inevitably meet the force of outraged public opinion and receive the punishment they deserve.

While we have moved upward on Mr. Jefferson's lines in charity, love of home and family, and love of country, we have widely departed from them in much of our governmental and public policy and now are largely ruled by personal power directed to personal ends. Getting wealthy through laws is a modern means of acquiring wealth; how the laws are passed is not a question, and doubtful privileges under grants from unpaid legislators, are now the too frequent sources of gain. This will end when the public get the exact bearings of it, and beneficiaries from and authors of these schemes will be promptly unhorsed and may be compelled to disgorge their ill-gotten gains.

As water is more dangerous than fire, so public opinion rightfully directed to a proper finality is the most dangerous revolution that corruption has to meet. A political revolution on Jeffersonian lines directed against some of the present methods of legislation would be beneficial, and the pretentious incropping and officiousness of the vulgar and debauching rich who frequently rule publicly in legislation or in office, because barred socially, by respectable people, would be of priceless value to the future of this Republic. These vulgarians with their display unsettle the minds and repose of good citizens.

Mr. Jefferson's rule as to public officers: "Is he honest? Is he competent? Is he an American?" is now frequently widely departed from. In many instances these comprehensive and essential qualifications are now condensed into "Is he rich?" "What's he got?" and then when he is offered as a candidate for office, the management inquires "How's he giving down?"

An age of vulgarity always gives way to an age of gentility, in which the well-bred and honest man whether of wealth, or not, is the superior of the vulgarian with it. Mr. Jefferson was the enemy of the vulgar rich, for he believed in simplicity in government, and battled against the aristocracy, the venal wealthy who revel in ill-gotten gains, and the monarchist wherever found; consequently he was the enemy of the grasping parvenues, who are always applicants for orders, decorations, rank and titles

and such purchasable things with which to lord it over their fellows, instead of the acceptable and essential elements of brains, culture, cultivating love of country and consideration for their fellow-men.

It is a misfortune that Mr. Jefferson is not alive to-day to assist in stifling our present vulgar wealthy class. Mr. Jefferson, were he now alive in this Republic, would, in many instances, be forced to move with fraudulent financiers, speculative robbers, skimmers of the poor and defenceless, characterless vagabonds, gilded in the possession of dishonorably obtained wealth. He would see legislators bow down as corruptors pass through their halls, and blackguards in evening dress received in houses, where they should be lackies waiting at back doors. Mr. Jefferson would also hear "The laws must be obeyed," and in many cases the people under duress compelled to submit to government of laws some of which they know have been corruptly enacted.

Mr. Jefferson would find, were he alive to-day, while in many cases character is considered but an incident, and the possession of money, no matter how obtained, the virtue, the most of our people yet esteem character as a virtue and decency as an honor; and were he alive he would also see that the people of his Republic are awake to this condition, and that while the cities may be hotbeds of corruption, the country with its free and inspiring life is our hope, and with his experienced eye he would

observe that the corrective time is coming when unworthy men will reach their true level, and that all men will yet be equal in this Republic.

Mr. Jefferson, were he alive at this date, and keeping abreast of the times, would be classed, as he protested, and urged correction of public evils—as he was denominated in his day and time—as one who excites to revolt and is ready to overturn. The vulgar and vicious reveling in vast privileges, who now flaunt their possessions with Babylonish freedom in the faces of decent people, and get power by fraud or treachery and sap the foundations of morality and liberty in so doing, would denounce Mr. Jefferson for insisting on the sacredness of one man's rights as well as the privileges of a class.

Mr. Jefferson's views of the rights of the individual were given in his letter to Mr. Weightman, of June 24, 1826, when invited to come to Washington and take part in the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of American Independence. Declining on account of advanced age he wrote: "All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately by the grace of God."

Mr. Jefferson was the broadest exponent of the doctrine of individual and personal rights that has thus far



appeared in our political system. Were he alive now and a witness of the criminal punishment of persons without jury trial, for civic offence, his pen that invigorated quiescent personal liberty into life on this continent, and challenged the world with the new and broad doctrine of "all men are created equal," would go to work again as potently as ever and force judges to go back to the rule and to respect the people's ancient right of personal liberty, and to give them the equal protection of the law, unfortunate though they may be.

Mr. Jefferson's life and deeds are now the best textbooks to be studied and restudied by Americans old and young. The preservation of individual liberty in this Republic is the only assurance we can have of our nation's permanence. Mr. Jefferson's writings and deeds are redolent with the odor of personal liberty. Personal liberty was the essential in 1776; in the rush of combination and the centralizing of interests it is more of an essential now. The tendency to a consolidation of interests in this Republic can be dangerous only as it stifles individualism or throttles personal liberty. With the death of personal liberty comes monarchy and then empire.

Will the present reign of the greed for the dollar land this Republic in monarchy? or will Jeffersonian doctrines, exemplified by individual actions, guide it into the harbor of permanency? The answer is, The people will correct all of this when aroused and charlatans and political vampires go to the rear.



Mr. Jefferson, could he come back to us for a time, with all of the doubt now hanging about us, with all of our present disagreements, after sounding the American heart, would find that, clouded as matters are now, the people are sound to the core, and he could go back to his rest at Monticello, knowing that watchers are awake on the ramparts of the citadel of liberty and that, thanks to him and like copatriots, liberty is so firmly founded that when the watchers give the signal of supreme danger the people will respond.

It would be difficult from the printed contemporaneous record of Mr. Jefferson's time to arrive easily at a fair conclusion as to the exact value of him as a man or as a statesman. The period of his political activity was a heated one, and during it and long after, he was an object of sharp attack by enemies and of earnest defence by friends. Still, on investigation, his life and deeds are his best defence, and are vouchers for him on the side of right.

Mr. Jefferson was many sided in argument, while steadfast in love of principle. He was not a disputant. The practice of law with its wrangles, was distasteful to him. His method of fighting a plan or a proposition to a conclusion was to propose it, back it up with all of his logic, knowledge and reason with the pen and by conversation, answer nothing, observe all, and meet criticism by attacking the points urged without mentioning

the author. This plan was peculiar to him, and he scarcely, if ever, failed in it.

Mr. Jefferson believed that the virtuous poor man was as good as the virtuous rich man, and both better than a bad man of any condition. He battled for the rights of the individual man as against the many. He despised monarchy in any form. Born in a leading circle of Virginian society, a gentleman by birth, instinct, education and culture, he was the marvel of his time in the fact that he attacked the aristocratic classes who were overriding the poor in the colonies, and aided in leveling them to their proper condition. "All men are created equal," he believed, and by the laws would make it so.

He was a man of tact, and while ready and anxious to make friends of enemies, and to call the disgruntled friend back and compromise, he was cunning and strategic, and while ostensibly yielding, he held on like death to his views and principles. He was hated by the dominant church faction in Virginia, and despised by the rich who were then anxious to retain control of affairs.

He was denounced by his enemies and many unreasoning persons as an infidel, while at all times he boldly proclaimed his belief and faith in God. His name was used as a bugaboo the land over, and to this day he is frequently held up as an ungodly man. Living a life as pure as was possible for a man to live, he was decried as a menace to law and order. A leveler of men and of

customs he stood in the breach for the rights of the people, who at times are too lazy or indolent to ask what is going on in public affairs. Meantime their liberties are stolen.

Why did the people love him? In office or out of it their happiness and comfort were his study. He was a farmer and agriculturist in the most comprehensive term. He believed that the one who made two blades of grass grow where but one had grown was a hero; that he who brought forth a new product of husbandry was worthy of fame. Whether in office or in retirement at Monticello, he watched and increased the usefulness of the earth. His hands and pen were constantly at work at and at the service of his fellows. Trees, vines, vegetables, flowers and fruits were his pride. His industry in teaching or advising his fellow men to become self-sustaining by tilling the soil was continual and thousands profited by it. He knew that the safest occupation for a nation is the cultivation of lands owned in severalty by the people.

If Mr. Jefferson had done nothing else save to aid man's knowledge of agriculture, he would have been a benefactor. In addition to his contributions to the science of agriculture, he founded the University of Virginia as a teacher of his views on education and gave it his time and attention for many years.

He was never an idler or drone.

He anchored his faith in government to laws properly made and administered by an educated and intelligent people over themselves, and he assisted in making laws whereby the people could peacefully assemble and participate in making their own government.

Many of the personal characteristics of Mr. Jefferson will always remain a question. His enemies proclaimed him an immoral man; his friends held him up as a model of the virtues. I arrived at my conclusion of Mr. Jefferson's personality from talking with people who knew him, and those who were his blood relations, who, in addition to their personal recollections of him, had the opportunity of almost constant chats with his oldest daughters.

He was decent in his life and habits, correct in his views of humanity, charitable, kind to the poor and unfortunate, and he believed in the moral and physical progress of mankind, and aided them by all means in his power.

Careful reading of many of the books published about him, conversation with those who knew him and who lived near him and with him, and weighing the attacks of his enemies at their worth, lead one to the conclusion that Mr. Jefferson was an honest and just man, and a patriot at all times; that he loved his fellow men on a principle and not as a mere sentiment; that he was a moral man and strictly preserved his manhood.

Mr. Jefferson's acquirements were as marked as his personality, he was the most copious letter writer of his time. His letters illumine all subjects that he mentions and show careful observation and research. His "Notes on Virginia" went through many editions, and are fresh and readable at this day. He was unrelenting in his opposition to tyranny, aristocracy and the reign of mere wealth, and to acts of oppression of man or of a class. He was iron in blood and fibre. At this distance from our Revolutionary War and its events, and after the almost constant research and discussion as to the leading men of that period and their qualities, it is not difficult to assign their places. George Washington—to mention his name even is to find him at the front of the Revolutionary War, its conduct and its success, and also to place him as the one man destined to complete it. Nathaniel Greene, of Rhode Island, by the rules of war was the best soldier of our revolutionary army. Benjamin Franklin, seventy years and more of age at the breaking out of the war, and with the experience of a long residence in Europe, was the wisest man on the civic side of the contest. Alexander Hamilton, the most versatile in high duties; John Adams, the most forcible, deliberate, and sedate; while Thomas Jefferson, the student and scholar, was the most useful. The three most scholarly Presidents of the United States to the present time are John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Rutherford B. Hayes.

The reader may inquire after reading the enumerations of and conclusions as to Mr. Jefferson's virtues as given in this book—had this man no faults, in public or private life? Yes, he had plenty of them, but mainly of a minor kind. His chief fault was his voluminous letter writing. He wrote well upon almost any subject. He had views on almost every subject, and so was frequently wrong. He was a scholar, a student, an agriculturist, a naturalist, an observer, a lawyer, publicist, and a statesman. He wrote on all of these subjects, and so armed his enemies with ammunition to be used against himself. The scandals of a personal nature charged against him would fill a book. Investigations prove that they were almost all false, and the inventions of his political enemies.

He was sometimes weak before public opinion, and at times misjudged men and their motives, and his expectations for the future in politics were sometimes not realized, because he had too much faith in men. He several times showed a lack of judgment because misled by enthusiasm or by excess of zeal.

These were the chief things seriously charged against him in his lifetime, but they are now forgotten. Considering and weighing all of his faults against his character and his services for mankind, they are as an atom against a mountain.

“He was the friend of liberty and he wrote the Declaration of Independence.”

The bibliography of Jefferson is now some six hundred volumes, and incidentally reaches thousands more. From the records, from the testimony of his fellows and family, from the results of his public acts and private virtues he stands in the front line of American immortals. He was useful to his period, and his life and deeds are valuable as an example to posterity; he was the chief founder of the Republic of the United States.

Lovers of liberty and the rights of man are partial to the name and fame of Thomas Jefferson; in our Republic he is the sweetest flower that blossoms in liberty's garden. The man at the wheel several times in periods of National danger, he always brought the Ship of State into port with banners flying. In public matters he kept his temper; he pushed onward for the liberty and rights of mankind, and he never failed to succeed. He made more notches on the column of progress of human rights in the years of his political life and power than any other five American statesmen—Thomas Jefferson, the publicist; the forceful man in the formative period of our Republic; the statesman and leader, was always in the forefront of the battle for humanity, giving and taking blows.

May the people preserve the Republic and thereby his memory!

This great man of affairs was as humane and lovable as a woman. This man who reached the highest possible altitude of human glory was one of the softest by



nature in private life, and beloved of children and brutes. He walks through history in public matters as the iconoclast. In his family and domestic life he was as gentle as the Master, and his presence as sweet as the voice of loving song.

Along in the eighties it was my privilege and honor to be a guest at the house of the last person living who was with Mr. Jefferson at his death. Stately, with Jefferson's features, even to his nose and his reddish-brown hair; queenly in manner and with a memory for family matters and events, as tenacious and retentive as that of a gossip society woman on personal scandals. This grand-daughter of Thomas Jefferson\* was a link connecting one epoch in our nationality with the other. Fourteen years of age at his death, she recalled vividly events that had happened eight years prior to that event. She recalled the home life at Monticello, and the habits and manners of her grandfather. She was born at Monticello; she saw James Madison, James Monroe and the Marquis De Lafayette sit at table with Mr. Jefferson. Incidents and events of our revolutionary epoch were chatted over in her presence as freely as current gossip is spoken of now in the family circle. She said that she then seemed almost a part of the revolution and its period, although long passed, because she heard it so frequently spoken about.

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\* Mrs. Septima Randolph Meikleham, born Septima Ann Carey Randolph.



General Washington and the heroes of the Revolution, by reason of this table chat, seemed to her to be friends and almost at hand. For Mr. Jefferson, whom she called "grandfather," she had unbounded affection. His tall\* figure, with narrow shoulders; reddish-brown hair, parted in the middle; turned up nose; perfect teeth, even at eighty-three years of age; kindly blue-gray eyes, the eyes of genius; his freckles; quiet, musical, hesitating, slowly used voice were constantly before her. His suit of gray, which he commonly wore, with clerical cut, tall collar and wide white necktie, and his low, black slouch hat impressed her; but all did not in any way convey to her any impression of greatness or an unusual mentality. She recalled him as a gentle loving person, without temper, attentive to the poor, kindly to the lowly, and the equal of any man who ever lived. Their long rides in the country about Monticello; their journeys to Mr. Madison's and Mr. Monroe's homes in the vicinage; the noonday halt, with lunch at a roadside spring, half-way on the journey from Monticello to Mr. Madison's at Montpelier she loved to talk about. She vividly recalled and described "Eagle," Mr. Jefferson's favorite saddle horse; she had often been placed upon him for a ride by Mr. Jefferson himself. She recalled the day when Mr. Jefferson was thrown from "Eagle's" back and his wrist broken. She sat day after day and heard Mr. Jefferson play the violin; one which

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\*He was six feet two and one-half inches high.

he had made himself, and so constructed that he could place it in his trunk when he traveled; and she recounted his efforts at carpentering.

Visitors overran them at Monticello. Mr. Jefferson was bankrupt, but the lodgers and consumers multiplied each year until his death. Fifty guests and their horses were once there at one time. She pictured to me a delightful old man whose chief aim was to make everybody about him happy. Never a harsh word, never a growl—patience and forbearance instead. Of course, she never knew how great her grandfather was until after his death, and even then recalling his mildness she would for herself wonderingly measure the grandeur of his acts. The simplicity of his character, in his later life, seemed to her to preclude greatness—and she used to say “and he wrote the Declaration of Independence.” And then her description of his death. Of the long days of patient waiting; of his calling the members of the household to him and saying good-bye to each; of the awful grief of her mother, and of the vast assemblage of citizens who came to lay him away. As she concluded this she said: “I peeped over the gallery in the hall at Monticello (women and small children did not then go to the grave at funerals in Virginia) as I heard the men coming in to carry my poor old grandfather out, and then I saw the bearers lift him, and as they went through the doorway it seemed that my heart and life and the sunlight went with them. As they

disappeared I fancied I could hear his sweet voice of but three days before (I was the last person who spoke to him) as I said, 'Good morning, grandfather, do you know me?' and as he moved his hand a bit I thought he said, 'Yes, dear.' And now, after more than fifty years, when I recall that hot July morning in 1826, and think I see that tall pure figure waiting for the touch of the angel, I can still hear faintly those sweet words, 'Yes, dear.'"

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After his death, tied with a bit of faded blue ribbon about it, in a gold locket, on a chain around his neck, they found, where it had rested for more than forty years, a lock of his wife's brown hair.



# THE HOUSE

## IN WHICH THOMAS JEFFERSON WROTE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

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In Philadelphia, prior to March, 1883, four different houses were pointed out or named to me as the exact and only place where Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. I visited three of the claimant houses existing in 1876, and afterwards set about to identify and locate the house in which Mr. Jefferson did write the Declaration of Independence.

The Indian Queen Inn, or hotel, which was in Fourth street, above Chestnut street, west side, was one of these houses. It was torn down in May, 1851, so, of course, I could not visit it.

After investigation it seems almost incredible that there should ever have been any doubt as to which was the house or where it was located, especially so when the fact is taken into consideration that Philadelphia has changed

as little in customs, buildings, people and traditions, as any American city existing in 1776.

The city had but few incomers, and only a nominal transient population. The outside world has had but small influence on her customs or local environment, so that her local history should be thoroughly preserved. Philadelphia is, in a measure, by reason of lack of a large transient population, cut off from the rushing activities of some of the other large American cities, and so changes are slowly made. While Philadelphia's people have a pride in her history, and in the city with its comforts and ease, only a few earnest men have devoted themselves to its historical features. Among these Ferdinand J. Dreer and Charles S. Keyser (also the late Thompson Westcott) have devoted time and money to this object, and their chief reward has been the consciousness of a useful work well done.

The investigator or student of history can well be astonished in view of these facts, that doubt could ever have arisen as to the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration, and it seems more strange that, after this doubt was settled and the house fixed by irrefragible proof, the doubt should be revived and perpetuated in bronze in the year 1897. Still, when one considers that the Board of City Trusts of Philadelphia, in charge of the Girard Estate, as late as September 9, 1897, found difficulty in locating the house where Stephen Girard

lived and died, one need not wonder at doubt respecting the Jefferson house. The expert reported as to Mr. Girard's residence (and there are people living in Philadelphia who saw Mr. Girard and saw him come and go to and from his house, and saw his funeral from it), "that from these facts, I judge that the residence of Mr. Girard in which he died was . . ." The statement is not made, "The residence of Mr. Girard was No. ———." From the language used the doubt is still in force. The details of this investigation were given in the papers of the day.

There was also, sometime about 1857, a claim that the Declaration of Independence was written in a house on the north side of Chestnut street, between Third and Fourth streets, and that it was not a corner house: an indefinite claim only and not important enough, in the light of facts, to more than notice. This house was never identified. The claim arose from a statement published in the "Life of Daniel Webster," by George Ticknor Curtis. In the winter (December) of 1824, Daniel Webster, in company with Mr. and Mrs. George Ticknor, who were his close friends, made a visit to Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. The visit was a social one and with an eye to completing a plan to regulate the course of studies at the University of Virginia. While on their return to Washington, and while stopping one night at an inn, Mr. Webster and Mr. Ticknor told Mrs. Ticknor of their conversations

with Mr. Jefferson during their four or five days' visit at Monticello. Mrs. Ticknor wrote them out. These data have been questioned. In relation to the Declaration of Independence Mrs. Ticknor's memoranda give the following: "The Declaration of Independence was written in a house on the north side of Chestnut street, between Third and Fourth,—not a corner house. Heiskell's Tavern (The Indian Queen Tavern or Inn) in Fourth street has been shown for it to Mr. (Daniel) Webster; but this is not the house."

All of the above is set aside by the letter of Mr. Jefferson to Doctor James Mease, written September 25, 1825. Some one was mistaken in the matter of the above location of the Declaration house,—either Mr. Jefferson who made it in December, 1824, and recanted it in September, 1825, or the gentlemen who gave the statement to Mrs. Ticknor to write down. Mr. Jefferson's biographer, however, questioned the accuracy of many of the statements written out by Mrs. Ticknor.



WEST.

EAST LINE OF LOT NO. 704 MARKET STREET

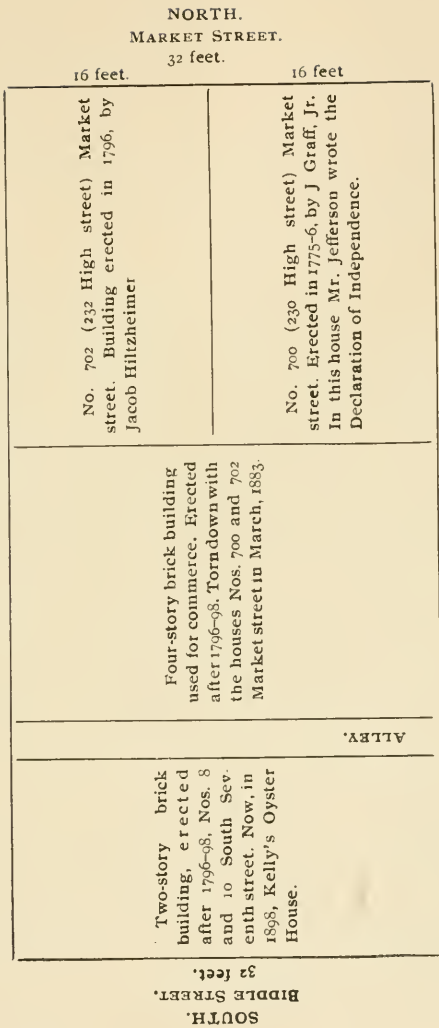


Diagram showing the subdivisions of the plot of ground purchased from Dr. E. Physick by J Graff, Jr., on June 1, 1775—from 704 Market street, east to Seventh street, and south, along Seventh street to Biddle street, from thence west to the eastern line of 704 Market street. See plate facing page 76, for a view of the buildings thereon in March, 1883.

EAST.

DIAGRAM OF J GRAFF, JR.'S, LANDHOLDING AT SEVENTH AND MARKET STREETS, SOUTHWEST CORNER, PHILA., PA.



## The Four Houses Claimed to Be the Declaration Houses.

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The four houses in Philadelphia claimed severally to be the one in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration were:

First. The Indian Queen Inn, located on the west side of Fourth street, above Chestnut and near Market street, and torn down in May, 1851.

Second. The brick house on the west side of Seventh street, south of Market street, and west along Biddle street; known as Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street, and now directly in the rear of the Penn National Bank building at Seventh and Market streets, and occupied in 1897 and known as Kelly's Oyster House.

Third. The brick storehouse, No. 700 Market street, on the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, once a dwelling and originally No. 230 High street. This was torn down in March, 1883, and its lot is now occupied by part of the eastern half of the stone building, in 1897, used by the Penn National Bank.

Fourth. The brick storehouse, No. 702 Market street, south side, once a dwelling house, and originally No. 232

High street. This was torn down in March, 1883, and its lot is now occupied by part of the western half of the stone building, in 1897, used by the Penn National Bank.

It is singular that no claim was ever made that Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in the four-story brick building facing on Seventh street, in the rear of Nos. 700 and 702 Market street, and to the north of Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street (Kelly's Oyster House), a four-foot alley intervening. This building was erected about 1796-98, and was torn down in March, 1883, along with houses Nos. 700 and 702 Market street. This building had four windows in the second, third and fourth stories on the east side, while the house, No. 700 Market street (once 230 High street) in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration had five windows in the second and third stories on the east side, when he resided in it, and also five windows in the fourth story on the east side after the Gratz Brothers reconstructed it. The plate facing page 53 shows the several buildings on the piece of ground from Market to Biddle street and on Seventh street—and east from No. 704 Market street—in March, 1883. The Penn National Bank building now [in 1897] covers the lot on which stood Nos. 700 (230 High street) Market street, and 702 (232 High street) Market street, and the lot about 40 x 32 on which this four-story building above referred to stood.

As to the Claim of Mr. Jefferson's Writing  
the Declaration of Independence  
in the Indian Queen Inn.

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The Indian Queen Inn appears first in the records, November 15, 1758, when John Nicholson is given as its landlord on Market street, Philadelphia. Several officers of the 17th British Regiment, General Forbes, were quartered there.\* "Indian Queen Inn" may have been the sign over the Market street entrance, or over the stables which were in the rear of the inn or hotel, which was itself on Fourth street, west side.

"In the Indian Queen tavern, south Fourth street, in the second story front room, south end, Jefferson [Thomas Jefferson] had his desk and room where he wrote and studied, and from *that cause* it has been a popular opinion that he there wrote the 'Declaration of Independence.' I have seen the place of the desk, by the side of the fire-place, west side, as pointed out by Cæsar Rodney's *son*."†

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\* See *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. III, p. 559.

† *Watson's Annals of Philadelphia*, Vol. I, p. 470.

Mr. Jefferson may have resided at the Indian Queen Inn prior to June, 1776, and before he took lodgings at the Graff House (Mrs. Clymer's), on the corner of Seventh and Market streets, and where he stated that he resided when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. It is known, however, that when Mr. Jefferson came to Philadelphia to attend the session of Congress which adopted the Declaration of Independence, he lodged first with Benjamin Randolph on Chestnut street.

In speaking of Inns, Watson writes: "Those (inns) remembered by me as most conspicuous forty-five years ago, were . . . The Indian Queen (kept) by Francis, in South Fourth street, above Chestnut street, where Jefferson, in his chamber there, as was mistakenly alleged, first wrote the celebrated Declaration of Independence—an original paper which I am gratified to say I have seen and handled."\* Continuing, Mr. Watson writes: "In the rear of said inn (The Indian Queen) in the yard and extending northward, is a long house of two story brick stabling, with a good cupola, thought by some to have been once made for a market house. It might look as if it had seen better days, but a very aged man told me it was used as stables, in his youth, to the Indian Queen Inn, *then* at the southeast corner of High and Fourth streets, kept by Little, and afterward by Thomson. Graydon also spoke of those stables

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\* Vol. I, p 466.

and of the inn (Indian Queen) at the corner (kept) by the Widow Nicholls, in 1760, of seeing there many race horses. The vane on the stables has some shot holes in it, made by some of the Paxtang boys, who came into the city in 1755 after the accommodation, and took up their quarters on the inn premises."\*

After relating the reason for the opinion prevalent that Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in the Indian Queen Inn or tavern, *Watson's Annals*, continues: "But my friend, John McAllister, told me in 1833, that he was told by the stepmother of the present Hon. John Sergeant, that Dr. Mease had inquired of Jefferson himself, by letter, and that he was informed by *him* that when he wrote that instrument, he lived in a large *new* house, belonging to the Hiltzheimer family, *up Market* street at the southwest corner of *some* crossing street. Mrs. Sergeant said that there was no doubt it was the *same* since so well known as Gratz's store, at southwest corner of Seventh and High streets."†

Willis P. Hazard notes in *Watson's Annals*: "The Indian Queen Inn—this building, after several changes, especially filling up an archway through which carriages formerly entered to the yard and stables in the rear, was pulled down in May, 1851."‡

Thus it appears that the statement that Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in the Indian

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\* Vol. I, 470.

† Vol. I, p. 466.

‡ Vol. III, p. 349.

Queen Inn, tavern, or hotel, rests for authority on mere legend. There is not even the shadow of truth in the claim, because Mr. Jefferson, from Monticello, Va., in his letter to Dr. James Mease, of date September 16, 1825, states that he did not write the Declaration of Independence in the Indian Queen Inn or tavern. He therein designates a house as the place other than the Indian Queen Inn.



As to the Claim of Mr. Jefferson's Writing  
the Declaration of Independence in the  
House Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh  
Street, and, in 1897, Known as  
Kelly's Oyster House.

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The small two-story brick house, now Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street, west side, is built on a lot about 32 x 30 feet and in the rear of the present Penn National Bank building. (The bank purchased this building and lot after 1883.) The ground upon which this building is built, along with that on which the Penn National Bank building now stands, is the original lot owned by Jacob Graff, Jr., June 1, 1775, which he sold to Jacob Hiltzheimer, July 24, 1777. This house runs south from the bank building, a four-foot alley intervening, to and west along a small street called Biddle street, at right angles to Seventh street. The house has been altered several times by the Kellys, oyster men, father and son, and it had been altered before it came into their possession. Houses Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street, prior to 1888 were used as separate buildings. Patrick Kelly opened an oyster house in the cellar of No. 10 South

Seventh street in 1839. He died in 1875. His son, Thomas Charles Kelly, succeeded him and removed from the cellar to the ground floor of No. 10 in 1888. John Hawley kept a tavern in No. 8 South Seventh street, for a long time prior to 1887, when he died, and he was succeeded by James Canning, whom Mr. Thomas C. Kelly bought out in 1889, and by whom the partition was taken down and the lower floor of Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street was made one building for business purposes. Mr. Kelly now, in 1897, occupies the property.

During the period of the Centennial Exhibition of 1876, the historic buildings of Philadelphia were, as a rule, marked for public information. To my recollection, there was no mark on the house No. 700 Market street, but on the house Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street there was a placard stating that it was the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. It also carried a huge sign "Jefferson House." One morning in July, 1876, with a party of friends I visited Mr. Hawley's saloon or tavern, in No. 8 South Seventh street. (No. 10 was then occupied as a store.) There were a front room and a back one. The bar was in the front room. The rear room looked out into a small grass covered yard. (Mr. Thomas C. Kelly extended the building out over this yard after 1889.) The bar or front room contained chairs and tables. The floor was sanded, and there were some racing and prize fighting prints on



A DECLARATION CLAIMANT HOUSE.

The house Nos. 8 and 10 S. Seventh street, Philadelphia—in the rear of the Penn National Bank building—Kelley's Oyster House in 1890. This is one of the Declaration claimant houses. It was not built until after 1796-98, or more than twenty years after the Declaration was written.



the walls. The place was cool and the whole appearance was inviting. We sat down and had a chat with the proprietor, Mr. Hawley, who gave us much legendary history, such as what "old Mr. —— said" and what "old Mrs. —— said" and what her daughter said, and that "there couldn't be any doubt about this being the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence." To the suggestion that this was a two-story house and that Mr. Jefferson had written that he resided in Mr. Graff's house, a three-story building, when he wrote the Declaration; also that this house was built by Jacob Hiltzheimer, not by Mr. Graff, but after Mr. Graff sold the lot then vacant to Mr. Hiltzheimer, the gentlemanly proprietor remarked that there were lots of smart Alecks about, and with many yarns, but these old walls look the heroes that they are! "But," he remarked slyly, "Jefferson was a big thing, and the Declaration of Independence was a big thing, but we've now got the biggest thing ever seen in these parts." The door to the rear room was a swinging one, of wicker work and not close at top and bottom. The landlord, whom we were refreshing, gave a signal, and a man, certainly the tallest one I have ever seen, stuck his arm over the door and, leaning his body over it into the bar-room, called out, "How are yez, lads." He certainly shocked us. We got up, opened the door and took a view of him. He was Irish, a Derry man, about

twenty-five years of age, good looking, and about eight feet high. His hat, a beaver tile, almost touched the ceiling of the room. The landlord remarked that the giant was just over; that he had imported him, and that he was fond of beer. Of course we ordered him a glass, but found that he used a pewter mug, and as the mug held two or three ordinary glasses of beer, we paid double rates for his beer. This huge man, James Allender, was a boy in manners and habits, and was a constant source of care to Mr. Hawley who had brought him out for an advertisement from County Derry. Mr. Hawley was afraid the lad would get lost. Sometimes he would slip out and wander along Chestnut and Walnut streets attracting crowds and forcing the police to move them on. Several times he was stolen by wags and kept away several days at a time. One day, late in 1876, some humorously inclined person drifted Allender out of Hawley's tavern and kept him away about two weeks. Mr. Hawley was in distress. To advertise in the newspapers for a "lost giant" would be absurd, so the word was passed around to the police and others that Hawley's giant was lost. He was finally found in the country, having a good time with the rurals in the vicinity of Wilmington, Del., and duly restored to the tavern. This giant died of consumption in 1878.

We found that the "Jefferson House" sign and the "Irish Giant" were catches for custom.

In 1880, I was accustomed to get my shoes repaired at a German's, who had the use of the passageway or alley, which was then covered, between the present Kelly Oyster House and the forty-foot building\* back on Seventh street, and of Nos. 700 and 702 Market street. One day, while getting the heel of a shoe fixed, I asked the German about the real Jefferson house. He replied that he had no particular knowledge of it, and then for mere fun I asked, "Did you know Mr. Jefferson?" "No, but I dink he must have been here youst before I come, so many peebles ask about him. He must haf hat a pig pishness."

I called on Mr. Thomas C. Kelly, one hot day in August, 1897, to have a chat about the building he occupied as an oyster house. Across the top of it, as I have mentioned, there used to be a huge sign "Jefferson House." He told me he took the sign down in 1892. It ran across the front of Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street. He offered to get me a piece of it for a relic, as it was lying in the back yard. He is a fine specimen of the American born Irishman, frank and direct of speech and an agreeable man. It was amusing to hear his confident speeches about this being "the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence," and that from his earliest boyhood he had been so taught. I explained to him that this house was not built for many years after the house on the southwest corner of Seventh and

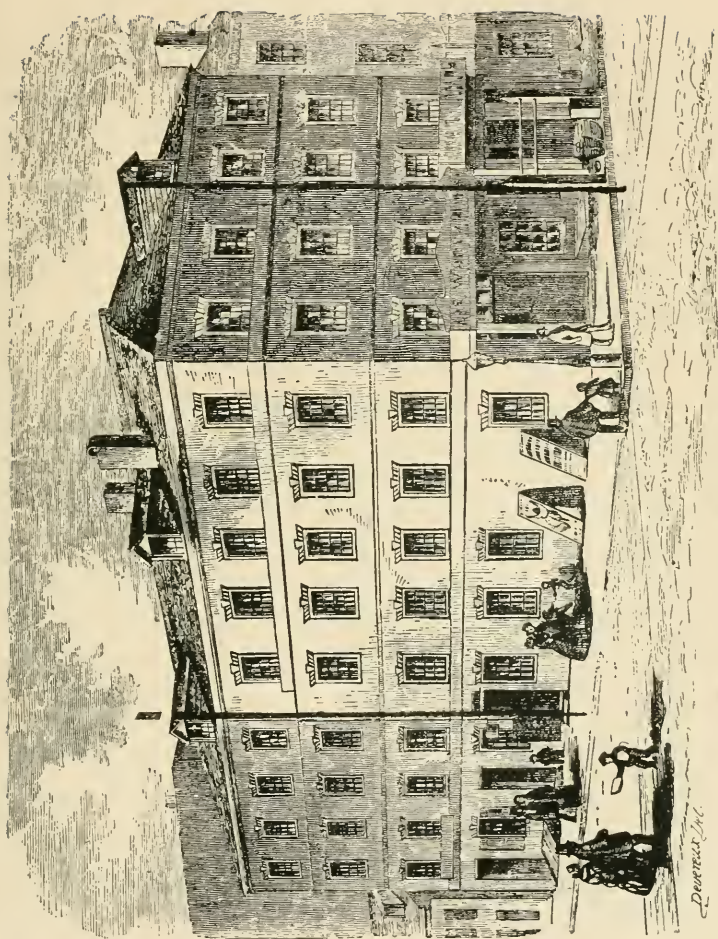
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\*For details as to this building, see page 56.

Market streets, in which Mr. Jefferson did write the Declaration of Independence, and showed him the facts. He accepted them and walked with me to the small street (alley) ten feet wide, south of his oyster house. "Up there on the wall there used to be a long time ago a board sign, 'Biddle Street.' It was removed when they altered the building on the south side of the street." He also showed me the lines of the alterations made by him in the two houses in 1889. Then we entered the house. As we sat about a table talking, several waiters came around (they were off duty as the house was closed for repairs), and listened to us with evident interest. After a bit, a couple of them drew aside and one said to the other, pointing to me (I could see them in a long glass that hung against a column), "Say, I tink dat's old Jeff himself, de second time on earth. He knows so awfully much about de house and de surroundings. Let's git. He may fake up some ghosts. Say, Boss Kelly's in danger. Let's give him de wink."

The conclusive reasons why the small two-story brick house Nos. 8 and 10 South Seventh street, west side, and sometimes called the "Jefferson House," could not have been the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence are: that Mr. Jefferson never resided there; that he wrote that he lived in a three-story house at the time; and, also, because it was not built when Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration. It was built after 1796-98,—some twenty years after the Declaration was written.





From Westcott's "Historic Mansions of Philadelphia."

DECLARATION HOUSE IN 1852.

Declaration House, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia, as it was in 1852. The upright black lines indicate the house. Other claimant houses adjoining.



As to the Claim of Mr. Jefferson's Writing  
the Declaration of Independence in the  
House, No. 700 Market Street, and  
also in the House, No. 702  
Market Street.

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These claims will be considered together, as the history of these houses is much interwoven.

There having been several conflicting claims as late as 1825 as to which was the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration. Dr. James Mease, a learned antiquarian of Philadelphia and author of "Picture of Philadelphia in 1800," knowing that Mrs. Clymer (with whom Mr. Jefferson boarded in the house which she kept at the time it was written) had said that it was written in the house which she kept and where Mr. Jefferson at the time resided, on the southwest corner of Seventh and High (now Market) streets (No. 230 High street; afterward, and to March, 1883, No. 700 Market street), Dr. Mease on the eighth of September, 1825, wrote

to Thomas Jefferson inquiring about the house and its location. Doctor Mease lived from his childhood near the corner of Seventh and Market streets, and asserted and believed that No. 700 Market street was the Declaration house. Mrs. John Sergeant told the eminent antiquarian, John McAllister, Jr., that the house on the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, or No. 700 Market street, was the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration. Nicholas Biddle, in his "Eulogium on Thomas Jefferson," delivered before the American Philosophical Society, April 11, 1827, gave his testimony that the house on the southwest corner of Market and Seventh streets was the house where the Declaration of Independence was written. At the close of the "Eulogium" (p. 45), Mr. Biddle continued: "I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. James Mease for permission to transcribe the following letters on the subject of the house in which the Declaration was written" (as noted, Dr. Mease had written Mr. Jefferson on the subject):

"MONTICELLO, Sept. 16, 1825.

"*Dear Sir*: It is not for me to estimate the importance of the circumstances concerning which your letter of the 8th makes inquiry. They prove, even in their minuteness, the sacred attachments of our fellow-citizens to the event of which the paper of July 4, 1776, was but the Declaration, the genuine effusion of the soul of our



THE DECLARATION HOUSE IN 1854.

Declaration House, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia, as it was in 1854. The upright white lines indicate the original lines of the building.



country at that time. Small things may, perhaps, like the relics of saints, help to nourish our devotion to this holy bond of our union and keep it longer alive and warm in our affections. This effect may give importance to circumstances, however small. At the time of writing that instrument I lodged in the house of a Mr. Gratz (Graff),\* a new brick house, three stories high, of which I rented the second floor, consisting of a parlor and bedroom ready furnished. In that parlor I wrote habitually, and in it wrote this paper particularly.†

“So far, I state from written proof in my possession. The proprietor, Gratz (Graff), was a young man, son of a German and then newly married. I think he was a bricklayer and that his house was on the south side of Market street, probably between Seventh and Eighth streets, and if not the only house on that part of the street, I am sure there were few others near it. I have some idea that it was a corner house, but no other recollections throwing any light on the question, or worth

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\* May 23, 1776, he took rooms at Graff's, paying thirty-five shillings sterling per week. He had the whole second floor for his use, the front room facing on Market street for his parlor, and the back one for his bedroom. His meals he took chiefly at Smith's City Tavern on Second street.

† The original draft of the Declaration of Independence in the handwriting of Mr. Jefferson and the signed copy on parchment, the signatures being almost all faded out, are now in the Department of State at Washington. Also, the writing desk used by Mr. Jefferson while writing the Declaration. This last was presented to the United States by Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, of Boston, during the administration of President Hayes.



communication. I will, therefore, only add assurances of my great respect and esteem.

“TH. JEFFERSON.”

“Dr. JAMES MEASE, Philadelphia.”

Mr. Jefferson, after answering Dr. Mease's letter of September 8, 1825, as above, wrote him again:

“MONTICELLO, Oct. 30, 1825.

“*Dear Sir:* Your letter of Sept. 8th, inquiring after the house in which the Declaration of Independence was written, has excited my curiosity to know whether my recollections were such as to enable you to find out the house. A line on the subject would oblige, dear sir, yours,

“TH. JEFFERSON.”

“Dr. MEASE.”

Mr. Biddle adds: “Mr. Jefferson was correct in his recollections, and the house is known to be that mentioned in the text.”

Miss Agnes V. McAllister, daughter of John McAllister, Jr., writes as to the Declaration house (see *Potter's Monthly Magazine*, January, 1874): “Mr. Hyman Gratz sketched for my father a plan of the house (southwest corner of 7th and Market streets) as it was in 1776. This, with some account of the property, which my father had collected and made a note of, he inserted in his copy of Mr. Biddle's ‘Eulogium’ (above referred to). The following is a copy of the sketch and the note:

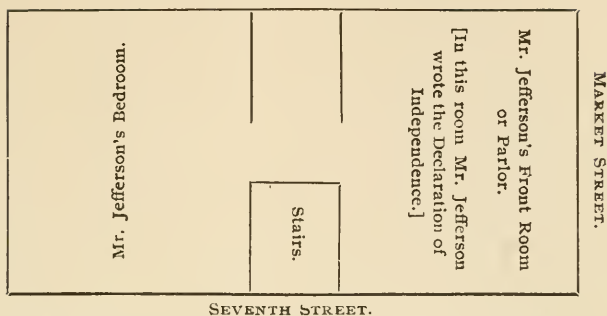




THE DECLARATION HOUSE IN 1857.

Declaration House, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia, as it was in 1857. The upright white lines indicate the original lines of the building.





PLAN OF SECOND STORY OF THE HOUSE WHERE MR. JEFFERSON WROTE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, S. W. CORNER SEVENTH AND MARKET STS., PHILADELPHIA.

“ ‘The above shows the original plan of the house at the south-west corner of Market and Seventh streets.\* The two rooms in the second story, having the stairway between them, were occupied by Mr. Jefferson in 1776. In one of

\* I confirmed the correctness of the above in March, 1883, while the building No. 700 Market street was being demolished. The bricks in the space of the original side door on Seventh street were of a different kind from those in the body of the building. The dimensions of the two second story rooms were about 48 feet 9 inches by 14 feet 6 inches. The joists filling in the original hallway (stairs) were of another kind than those of the rest of the floor. The Gratz brothers, Simon and Hyman, who bought the house No. 230 High street, afterward No. 700 Market street, and also Nos. 232 High street and 234 High street, afterward Nos. 702 and 704 Market street, all adjoining in 1798, added the fourth story to No. 230 High street (No. 700 Market street) the Declaration house and to the others. They also walled up the side entrance door of No. 700 Market street, the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and removed the cross stairway. An entrance to the second story was afterward placed in the south end of the building on Seventh street and this remained until 1883. There was, at one time, a stairway to the second, third and fourth floors from Market street and on the west side of the building. The joists were cut all the way up and the old trimmer was in sight in 1883. Such a front stairway was common to stores on Market street in early days —T. D.

these rooms he wrote the Declaration of Independence. (Mr. Jefferson wrote that it was in the parlor or room fronting on Market street.) The corner house (No. 700 Market street) and the two adjoining houses on Market street (viz.: Nos. 702 and 704) became the property of Messrs. Simon and Hyman Gratz,\* merchants, about 1798, and were for many years occupied by them as their place of business. They added a fourth story to the height. They also closed up the door on Seventh street and removed the stairs (those across the building). The whole of the second story of the corner house is now in one room

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\* The Gratz Brothers, Hyman and Simon, were merchants, and of an old and respected Philadelphia family. Another of the Gratz brothers, Benjamin, lived at Lexington, Ky., and was a progressive and enterprising citizen. He was a trusted friend of Henry Clay, and was active in affairs of the Transylvania University. He died at a great age, being past ninety-five, and during the eighties.

Simon Gratz, of Philadelphia, now of the Board of Revision of Taxes, and earnest in public school work as President of the School Board, Mr. Alfred Gratz, late Register of Wills, of Philadelphia, Mrs. A. K. McClure and Mrs. Felix F. De Crano are grand-children of Simon Gratz. In December, 1897, I wrote to Mr. Simon Gratz for a minute in relation to Hyman and Simon Gratz above mentioned, and who were long owners of the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. He replied:

CITY HALL, PHILADELPHIA, PA., Dec. 14, 1897.

*My Dear Sir:*—Simon Gratz, of whom you ask for biographical facts, was my grandfather. He died in 1838 or 1839, before I was born. Hyman Gratz was my grand-uncle. He died somewhere about 1860. I have often seen him; but I do not remember that he ever said anything to me, or in my presence, about the house southwest corner Seventh and Market streets. Some of the so-called historical statements in regard to this house are very erroneous in many particulars, owing chiefly to a confusion of the names Gratz and Graff.

An article in the *Century Magazine*, vol. 2, page 679, etc., on "Rebecca, the Heroine of Ivanhoe" [Rebecca Gratz, Sir Walter Scott's heroine and one of this family], will give you some information in regard to Simon Gratz.

You will find a short biography of Hyman Gratz in a book called "Eminent Philadelphians," published by Henry Simpson, in 1859.

(in 1855),\* but the place where the old stairway came up can be seen by the alterations in the boards of the floor. The corner house was occupied in 1776 by the father of the late Mr. Frederick Graff, who was then an infant. He told me that he could remember hearing his parents say that he had often sat on Mr. Jefferson's knee. The sketch of the original plan of the house, from which this copy was made, was drawn for me to-day by Mr. Hyman Gratz.

“ ‘JOHN MCALLISTER, JR.’ ”

“ ‘July 6, 1855.’ ”

The whole question, down to 1879, of identifying the house in which the Declaration was written, is most admirably stated by Willis P. Hazard, in *Watson's Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania*.†

The doubt expressed therein by Mr. Hazard was the echo of Mr. Watson's memoranda on the subject in 1834: “The place of *writing* the Declaration has been differently stated, some have said that it was at Jefferson's chamber in the Indian Queen Inn; but Mrs. Clymer, with whom Mr. Jefferson boarded, at the southwest corner of Seventh and High (Market) streets, said it was there, and to settle that point, Dr. Mease wrote to Mr. Jefferson and *had it confirmed* as at her house.”‡

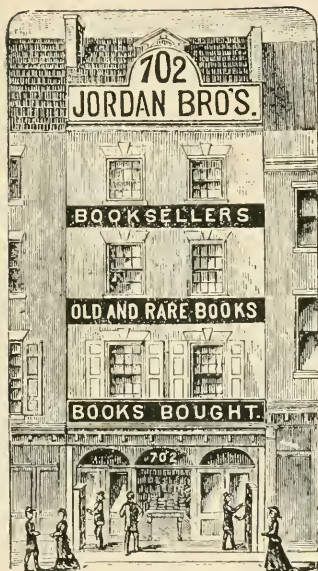
\* Altered afterward so as to make three rooms.—T. D.

† Vol. III, p. 226-229, Edwin S. Stuart edition, 9 South Ninth street, Philadelphia, Pa.

‡ *Watson's Annals*, Vol. II, p. 309.

This was the situation down to March, 1879. From 1880 to 1883, the property No. 702 Market street was occupied by the brothers Jordan, book sellers and dealers in rare books; they are now publishers, and most capable and obliging gentlemen. I was on excellent terms with them and was a frequenter of their store, and obtained from them all the knowledge they had of the question whether the store they occupied (No. 702) was the building in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and what formed the basis of the claim they put forth on their business card that it was the building. The legend, "In this building Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence," was printed across the left hand side of their business card, and over and on a portion of the house No. 700 Market street, then occupied as a trunk store, and in which Mr. Jefferson did write the Declaration of Independence. It would seem that the Messrs. Jordan were prepared for any discussions as to which house it was written in, and that their claim was tentative. In the meantime, and for a year or two prior to 1883, the two properties 700 and 702 Market street were for sale, and, I think, at \$80,000. No effort was made to purchase and preserve them for a city museum or for their historic value. Shortly after they were sold to the bank, and public notice of the same given. The late Mr. Edward T. Steel, a public spirited and enterprising citizen, said to me (he had but just learned

In this Building Thomas Jefferson wrote  
the Declaration of Independence.



No. 702 MARKET STREET.

A DECLARATION CLAIMANT HOUSE IN 1883.

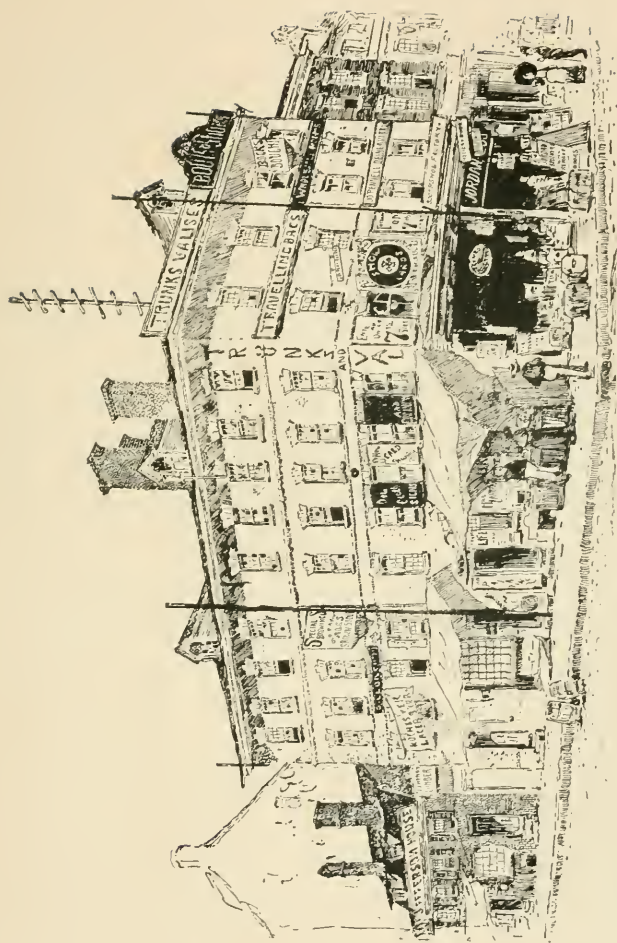
Business card of Jordan Bros., occupants of No. 702 Market street prior to March, 1883. This was the house to the west of and adjoining No. 700 Market street (the house in which Mr Jefferson did write the Declaration). This is one of the Declaration claimant houses. It was not built until 1796. It was torn down along with No. 700 Market street, in March, 1883.





of the sale and the proposed destruction of the Jefferson building), that it was a cloud upon the patriotism of the city, and that he would be glad to join any one in buying the buildings back and making a city museum of them, so that they might be preserved. No such movement could, however, then be organized. Some years afterward Mr. Frank Thomson, then first vice-president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, said to me that he would be only too glad to join any one in restoring and rebuilding the house in Fairmount Park. With these two exceptions, no serious thought, to my knowledge, was ever given in Philadelphia to preserving or restoring this historic house. I should mention that, after the building was torn down, however, and it was known that I possessed some parts of it and contemplated restoring and erecting it, one rich gentleman said something to me about buying it and erecting it as a School of History at the University of Pennsylvania. The action, however, died in the thought. He merely thought that he would. Another gentleman, an old citizen, enormously pious, who it was found out tolerated persons for years under the belief that he could finally fetch them to his way of thinking, also wanted to rebuild it as an example for youth, but he announced one day, and with vigorous gesture and appalled looks, that positively all such intentions had now left his mind. It was said that he had ascertained that Mr. Jefferson was not a member of any church, and,

in fact, was unorthodox and that, although Mr. Jefferson had done much for mankind, he thought it dangerous to exalt the good deeds of such a man, because children and others might discover that it was possible for one outside of the fold to do great good for his fellow-men, and this might work great injury to the church as an organization. He regretted that he could not rebuild the building, as it was impossible for him under the new light he had received to thus aid in perpetuating Mr. Jefferson's memory.



*Drawn by Joseph Pennell, from Harper's Weekly, April 14, 1883.*

THE DECLARATION HOUSE, APRIL 14, 1883.

The Declaration House, marked by the corner, long upright black lines, southwestern corner of Seventh and Market streets, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia, in February, 1883, just prior to its demolition. The adjacent buildings on the original J. Graff, Jr., plot are shown. Also see diagram, opposite page 54.



Identification of the House where Mr.  
Jefferson Wrote the Declaration  
of Independence.

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I was convinced from what I had read, heard and seen, that the house No. 700 Market street, or the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, was the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. After it was sold I made up my mind to buy the material of this house and rebuild it in some proper place. To this end I consulted with my friend, Professor Spencer F. Baird, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (I was at that time the general agent of that Institution, and of the National Museum, as well), and he thought if I would buy the material and put it away for a time, we could prevail upon some patriotic citizen of fortune and of the class to whom a dollar is not the beginning and end of life (of whom there are some left in the United States), to rebuild it at Washington in the National Museum grounds. I carried out my part of the agreement fairly well, but the patriotic citizen before mentioned has not materialized.

Professor Baird died, and our plan for rebuilding came to naught. With an eye to acquiring ownership of the material of the building No. 700 Market street, one day in December, 1882, I called at the Penn National Bank, at the corner of Vine and Sixth streets, Philadelphia, formerly the Penn Township Bank, and met Mr. Gillies Dallett, the president. I stated my desires, which he seemed to approve, and left him this written proposition: "Philadelphia, Pa., December 6, 1882. I will give the Penn National Bank \$500.00 for the old material in, and will remove the same from, the building and ground, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia. Thomas Donaldson, No. 132 N. 40th St., Phila., Pa."

Mr. Dallett thought that the matter could be easily arranged, bade me rest easy, and said he would notify me at the proper time. I went away feeling that the matter was safe, and was not aware at the time that Mr. Dallett was suffering at that time from a defective memory. Had I known this, in the light of subsequent events, I would have taken care that his memory was refreshed, or at least that his mind was kept on my matter. So the transaction rested, I being under the impression that I was to have the material of the building and would be notified when to take it away. I made preparations to remove it.

Early on the morning of Wednesday, February 28, 1883 (there was snow on the ground), I was riding down Market street in a street-car. We halted on the opposite

side of Seventh and Market and I happened to look up at a dormer window on the Jefferson house, No. 700 Market street, when I saw a man come out of the window with an iron bar in his hand. I dismounted from the car at once. Presently another one came out, and after a bit, a dozen or more men, similarly armed, were on the roof of the historic house. I saw a huge Celt, at the word of command, thrust his crow-bar under the shingles of the roof, and the destruction of one of the most historic buildings on the globe was begun. I walked rapidly up to the Penn National Bank, at the corner of Sixth and Vine streets, and waited outside until it was opened. Mr. Dallett came in, and I at once addressed him. It is unnecessary to write that I promptly accused him of breach of faith with me and called his attention to my letter of December 6, 1882. He looked confused and at once began to search his desk for it. Finally, he found it; I meanwhile hammering at him all the time and urging that he was one of the class of bank vandals who sells his birthright for cent per cent, or skins mankind where it is possible. I was younger then than now and more full of fire and patriotism. Poor Mr. Dallett, when he could get a word in edgeways, began, "My dear friend, won't you listen to me a moment. I forgot your proposition. I mislaid it. I plead guilty and throw myself on the mercy of the court. Now, what can I do to repair my error?" I was so taken aback at his evident honesty

that I could hardly answer him. "Oh, I beg your pardon; but I was so astonished at seeing the house being destroyed. . . ." "Yes, yes; but what can we do now to repair my mistake?" "Well, I want certain parts of the building and some bricks, say those of the second story." He called a clerk, who telephoned to Mr. Sam Hart, the contractor for the brick work, and Mr. Thomas Little, the contractor for the wood work, and asked their consent to my operations. He received it and I departed happy. I paid Mr. Thomas Little, a most genial and reliable man, a nominal sum for the material I selected. Mr. Little was a patriotic citizen. He was a soldier with Walker, the gray-eyed man of destiny, in Nicaragua, and many were the chats he and I had about Walker and the West. Mr. Robert Gray, his foreman, aided me in every way possible to get material while the building was being demolished. I remained in and about that building from Wednesday, February 28, 1883, until March 12, 1883, when it was leveled to the ground. Much of the material which I took from the building No. 700 Market street, I temporarily placed in the cellar of the store of my friend, Henry Troemner, No. 710 Market street. Now, as a curious fact, I took from a closet in the front room of the third story, some Continental money, many old receipts, some of them as early as 1791, a Hebrew letter to Mr. Gratz, of date 1802, several curious old cork inkstands, and about a quart of small



Philadelphia, April 2nd 1883

Mr Thomas Donaldson #132 N 40<sup>th</sup> Street  
TO THOMAS LITTLE, DR

CONTRACTOR & BUILDER.

RESIDENCE, 343 SOUTH 12TH ST

718 South Eleventh Street.

1883  
trachs

To Oak and cherry joists, window  
frames and sashes, marble  
floor and window heads  
and sills, stairways, steps  
and risers, Doors, cupboards  
and mantels, partitions also  
flooring and bricks of 2nd  
story; and woodwork of building  
at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and  
Market Street, numbered 700 - being  
the house in which Thos. Jefferson  
wrote the Declaration of  
American Independence, # 75 00.

Received Payment

Thomas Little

Contractor for Woodwork  
and demolition of the same

BILL FOR MATERIAL OF DECLARATION HOUSE.

Bill of Thomas Little, contractor for its demolition, to Thomas Donaldson, for the old material of the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia.



pistol flints, like those used in the Revolution. The nails of the old portion of the house were hand made, and the joists were of cherry, oak, walnut and other rare woods—all of them imported. The outside bricks on Seventh street, and the front, were imported and were laid alternately, black and red. The house had been painted a gray or yellow, thus hiding or covering the original color of the bricks. Some large keys were found, perhaps 150 in all, which I have, and also an ancient door lock, hand made, a work of art, which once adorned the front door of the Jefferson house. Some mantles, stairways and rails were also ancient and rare. All of these articles of any interest, along with the window-frames, stone caps and sills, old doors and sashes, floors, stringers and wood-work, I took out and now have stored under roof on a lot in Philadelphia. This material has been there thirteen years. The insurance escutcheon, which was the "Green Tree," which was on the east wall of No. 700, below the middle second-story window, Mr. Dallett, I think, received.

It is a curious fact that while this building was being torn down there were no relic hunters about and no curiosity evinced by spectators. A few antiquarians called and confirmed No. 700 as the house. The only person who asked for a relic was Mr. Augustus R. Hall, of Hall & Carpenter, No. 709 Market street, and he got a joist out of No. 700 Market street

house. It was cloudy for five days after the destruction of the building began and no photograph of it was taken. The "kodak" was not in general use then. I saw Mr. F. Gutekunst, the eminent photographer, about taking some views of it, but it could not then be done.

I remained exposed to the weather in this duty for thirteen days, and at the end of that time went to bed, ill with a cold and quinsy, and remained there two weeks. The fourth day of the tearing down revealed what I all along had suspected: that No. 700 Market street was the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, *because it was the first house built on the Graff lot.* Mr. S. Hart, Mr. Thomas Little and Mr. Robert Gray were present when I knocked some of the plaster off the west wall of No. 700 Market street, which was the inside of the east side of No. 702 Market street, the house recently claimed to be the one in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration. We found that it was the outer wall of No. 700 Market street when it was a single unattached building, because the joints between the bricks were struck joints to resist the weather as well as for appearances, a thing which was then never done on an inside wall. Perhaps at the suggestion of these gentlemen I wrote the following, on March 8, 1883, to the Philadelphia *Press*, inviting persons interested to come and see the proof that No. 700 Market street was

the Jefferson house. It was published in the *Press*, March 17, 1883:

AN HISTORICAL POINT SETTLED.

WHERE DID JEFFERSON WRITE THE DECLARATION OF  
INDEPENDENCE?

*To the Editor of the Press.*

SIR:—Newspaper statements as to current events make history. Your esteemed contemporary, the *Evening Telegraph*, in its issue of March 7, in an article, "The Cradle of Liberty," states that the house No. 702 Market street, or the one next to the corner of Seventh street, is the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. This is an error that should be corrected to save future controversy. It has been claimed that Mr. Jefferson, at the date of the writing, in June or July, 1776, resided in both houses, viz.: at No. 700, directly over the southwest corner of Market and Seventh—in 1776 No. 230 High street—and No. 702, next house to the corner, going west, or No. 232 High street. \* \* \* But this claim for No. 702 is of recent origin.

The whole question of which is the house turns upon the point of which house was built by Jacob Graff, Jr.—'75-'76—and on which side of the thirty-two-foot lot on Market (High) street was it built. The *Telegraph* article (based undoubtedly upon the reasoning in *Potter's American Monthly*, May, 1876, wherein a person claims for the second house, or No. 702, the honor of the birthplace of the Declaration) stated that Graff, Jr., built his house in '75-'76, on the western side of the lot sold by Edmund Physick to him June 6, 1775. Where this information was obtained is a

mystery. Certainly, none of the antiquarians or historians have ever before found this record.

The weight of authority has always before May, 1876, and yesterday, been on the side of the view that the house built by Graff, Jr., in which Mr. Jefferson lodged, was the corner house, or No. 700 Market street, or the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, then a three-story brick building, now or recently a four-story cream-colored brick building. Mr. Jefferson thought this was the house, Dr. James Mease thought it was, Nicholas Biddle believed it was, Mrs. Clymer thought it was—she lived in it—Watson believed it, John McAllister, Jr., and his daughter, Miss A. Y. McAllister, so held, and Mr. Thompson Westcott, our accomplished local historian, has so firmly maintained, and the people of the city almost all believed it to be. Now what say the houses themselves. For the last four days the writer has laboriously developed the "testimony of the rocks," and has been faithful in attendance at the destruction of this landmark, and as the structures have come down story by story, with a careful eye he has noted the truth.

The house built by Jacob Graff, Jr., in '75-'76 on the thirty-two-foot front lot on Market street, then High, was not on the western side of the lot (now number 702), but was on the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, or the eastern side of the said lot, and herein, first. The western wall of the corner building, No. 700, against which lies the plaster of No. 702, is a smooth-faced wall of hard brick, with the joints struck—an outside wall showing that the corner house was built first. The inside of the party wall between the two houses, or western wall of the corner building No. 700, which is to the east, is a rough, soft brick wall—an inside wall such as is never built for an outside wall; and the joists in the corner building, or No. 700, are built into the walls, or at the time

the walls were built, while the joists in No. 702 to the third story are inserted in holes cut into the party wall between the two, or the western wall of No. 700, showing that it was built after the corner house No. 700; and in addition the inside west wall of No. 702 is the outside east wall of No. 704, and to the third story is an outside wall with struck joints.

The party wall between Nos. 700 and 702, being the west wall of No. 700 and the east wall of No. 702, is simply the west wall of No. 700, the return being to the front and rear wall of No. 700. The front and rear wall (each of the houses proper being about fifty feet deep) of No. 702, or the second house from the corner, being independent of and separate from the walls of No. 700, or the corner house, until after they reach the top of the third story of each, where there is an unbroken front, being the front wall placed there by the Gratz brothers when they raised the two buildings to four stories; so that No. 702 to the top of the third story is a building built in between No. 700, on the east, and No. 704, on the west, or the original building of Graff, Jr., No. 230 High street, No. 700 Market street, and the building of Baltus Emerick, No. 234 High street, now No. 704 Market street (built before 1785); and the said building, No. 702, was built about the year 1798,\* for in that year it first appears in the directories as the property of Simon and Hyman Gratz, who occupied it at No. 232 High street. Persons interested can walk to the building and now see the facts as stated above. So that the buildings Nos. 700 and 702 Market street, now in process of demolition, begun on Wednesday of last week—or February 28, 1883—themselves show that Jacob Graff, Jr., in 1775-'76, built his house on the southwest corner of High (now Market) street, on a thirty-two-foot lot,

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\* 1796. See pages 87 and 88.

running westward, sold to him by E. Physick, on the east side, or corner of said lot; that the adjoining lot, part of the said thirty-two feet, was not built upon until after the house on the corner was built, which we know by the record to have been many years after 1776; so that the house in which Thomas Jefferson lived when he wrote the Declaration of Independence, in June or July, 1776, was, and is, the house on the southwest corner of Market street (formerly High street) and Seventh, and originally numbered 230 High street—now numbered 700 Market street; then three stories high, now or lately four, and in the second-story front room—corner of Market and Seventh streets—as appears by letter of date Monticello, September 16, 1825, written by Mr. Jefferson to Dr. James Mease, of Philadelphia. The houses themselves tell which house it was written in, and Mr. Jefferson's letter the room.

THOMAS DONALDSON.

*Philadelphia, Pa., March 8, 1883.*

Meantime many antiquarians and local historians had called and observed the proof as above set forth. The house No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia (and up to 1858 No. 230 High street), which stood on the eastern sixteen feet of the lot fronting on thirty-two feet, on Market street, and on which now stands part of the eastern half of the building owned and occupied by the Penn National Bank, and running about fifty feet south on Seventh street, was the house in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in June, 1776.



Additional and Confirmatory Proof that No.  
700 Market Street Was the House  
in which Mr. Jefferson Wrote  
the Declaration.

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The following extracts from the diary of the man who purchased both the lots known as 700 and 702 Market street from Jacob Graff, Jr., July 24, 1777, are given in the "History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884," by J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott. The existence of this diary was not known to me when I found, in March, 1883, that the brick building on the corner of Seventh and Market streets (No. 700 Market street), was the first building erected on the J. Graff, Jr., lot thirty-two feet in width on Market street, now (in 1897) occupied in part by the Penn National Bank building.

The Scharf-Westcott "History of Philadelphia" gives the following:

"The fact [as to which house the Declaration was written in] is settled beyond dispute [that the corner house, or No. 700 Market street, was the one] by the following entries in the private diary [manuscript] of

Jacob Obillzheimer [Hiltzheimer], who bought the house at the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets in 1777 [viz.: the one Mr. Jefferson resided in in June and July, 1776, and when he wrote the Declaration]:

“ ‘ 1796, January 10. Cloudy forenoon. Edward Wells came to see me; conversed with each other concerning the house he is to build for me next spring, in Market street, adjoining the southwest corner of Seventh and Market.’ ” [i. e., No. 230 High street, or 700 Market street, after 1858.]

“ ‘ 1796, April 11, Thursday. . . . Mr. Barge laid the foundation-stone at the house I am going to build adjoining the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets.’ ” [Afterward No. 232 High street, or 702 Market street.]

“ ‘ 1796, April 28. Mr. Lybrand, the carpenter, put the first floor of joist, next to my house at Market street.’ ” [Viz.: on the foundations at No. 232 High street, or 702 Market street.]

“ ‘ 1796, July 9, Saturday. . . . Had the raising supper on the second floor of the house adjoining the house at the southwest corner of Market and Seventh streets, which was begun in April last, intended for a store.’ ”\*

This house was No. 232 High street, and, after 1858, No. 702 Market street, and was on the western side, viz.:

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\* Vol. I, p. 320, 1884.

sixteen feet of the lot of thirty-two feet front on Market street, west from Seventh street, on which now stands part of the Penn National Bank building. This diary shows, as did the building, No. 700 Market street, that the house, No. 702 Market street, was built about twenty years after 1776, in fact in 1796, and of course that it was not standing at the time Mr. Jefferson resided at No. 700 Market street, then 230 High street, and the corner house in which he did write the Declaration of Independence. The extracts from the diary of Jacob Obillzheimer (Hiltzheimer) are confirmatory of the story told by the walls of the old building No. 700 Market street.





CORRECT SITE OF DECLARATION HOUSE ON GROUNDS OF PENN  
NATIONAL BANK.

Actual position of the Declaration House, relative to the Penn National Bank building, southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, Philadelphia, 1898.



## A New Doubt Raised in 1883-84 as to Where Mr. Jefferson Wrote the Declaration of Independence.

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After all the foregoing, and no fact was ever better proved than that No. 700 Market street was the house in which the Declaration of Independence was written, it was concluded to place a bronze tablet on the front of the bank building to commemorate the writing of the Declaration of Independence somewhere in the vicinity, and on Thursday, February 14, 1884, a tablet was placed on the bank building. Mr. George Thomas, of J. B. Lippincott Company, told me in 1885, that the tablet was suggested by Miss H. A. Zell, the historian of Germantown. The building having been designed and built, the question was where to put the tablet. There was a large door on the corner of the bank building and a wide window in the west side of the front and a panel between them. A happy inspiration struck some one! The tablet was placed in the *centre of the panel*, and this being in the centre of the bank building, the tablet covers portions of the lot where stood the house in which Mr. Jefferson wrote the Declaration and the one in which he did not write it.

Thus the tablet refers to a lot covered by part of the present bank building and which also had no building on it in 1776. So the tablet is on the front of the building with its centre over the dividing line of the two sixteen-foot lots of No. 700 and No. 702 Market street. The inscription on this bronze tablet or shield is:

[No. 700 Market Street.]		[No. 702 Market Street.]
ON TH	IS SITE	
ORIGINALLY STOO	D THE DWELLING	
IN WHICH THO	MAS JEFFERSON	
DRAFTED THE DECLARA	TION OF INDEPENDENCE,	
WHICH WAS AD	OPTED BY THE	
CONTINENTA	L CONGRESS,	
IN THIS CITY,	JULY 4, 1776.	
ERECTED, 1775.		REMOVED, 1883.

Which is the site, No. 700 or No. 702 Market street, or the lot on Seventh street, in the rear of them? All are now covered by the Penn National Bank building.

#### A PARALLEL.

The only other prominent incident of this kind that I am aware of, or one that is parallel to it in American history, is the case of the physician who wanted to honor the member of his craft who discovered the use of ether as an anæsthetic. The discovery was claimed for both





CORRECT POSITION OF MEMORIAL SHIELD ON PENN NATIONAL  
BANK BUILDING.

Plate indicating the proper position for the shield marking the site of the Declaration House, now on the front of the Penn National Bank building, southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, Philadelphia. Present position of the shield is on the building in the rear of the telegraph pole on Market street.



Doctor Morton and for Doctor Jackson. This physician got pictures to represent both claimants, put them up in his office, and under them had painted:



DR. MORTON.



DR. JACKSON.

TO E(I)THER.

The bronze tablet, as now fixed in the front wall of the Penn National Bank, at the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, makes an incorrect statement and is a misleading memorial. It should be placed over and near the centre of the present north doorway or entrance to the bank. The dwelling in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence in June, 1776, was No. 700 Market street (formerly No. 230 High street), and was situated on the southwest corner of Seventh and Market streets, being sixteen feet front on Market street and running back or south fifty feet on Seventh street, on which site now stands about one-third of the Penn National Bank building.





REMAINS OF THE DECLARATION HOUSE, JANUARY, 1898.

Material from the Declaration House, No. 700 Market street, Philadelphia, purchased from Thomas Little, contractor for its demolition, under cover on a lot in Philadelphia, in January, 1898. The house to the left was built out of material from the buildings of the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, in 1876.



## The Declaration of Independence.

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### THOMAS JEFFERSON'S ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGIN AND ADOPTION.

Mr. Jefferson prepared a memoir as to the origin and adoption of the Declaration of Independence, which was published in the work on Mr. Jefferson, by Thomas Jefferson Randolph, a grandson and his literary executor.\*

Mr. Jefferson, in his Memoir, after noting the continual progress of the spirit of liberty throughout the colonies in the years prior to 1776, details the proceedings in Congress for a period anterior to the creation of the Committee to report the Declaration of Independence, in June, 1776. Congress was almost constantly discussing the question of separation from the crown during this session.

The value of these notes is increased by the fact that they were made by one of the chief, if not the chief, actors in the events.

The convention of Virginia, on May 15, 1776, instructed its delegates in Congress to propose to that body that they declare the colonies independent of Great Britain.

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\*Memoir, Correspondence and Miscellanies, from the Papers of Thomas Jefferson. Edited by Thomas Jefferson Randolph. Boston: published by Gray & Bowen; New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830.

Mr. Jefferson writes: "In Congress [sitting in the large room, lower floor, to the left when you enter Independence Hall, Sixth and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa., and where the Declaration was discussed and signed], Friday, June 7, 1776. The delegates from Virginia moved, in obedience to instructions from their constituents, that the Congress should declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; that measures should be immediately taken for procuring the assistance of foreign powers, and a confederation be formed to bind the colonies more closely together."

The above was debated in Congress on Saturday, June 8, and Monday, June 10, 1776.

Mr. Jefferson then gives a synopsis of the debate, naming the participants. Mr. Jefferson continues:

It appearing in the course of these debates, that the colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina were not yet matured for falling from the parent stem, but that they were fast advancing to that state, it was thought most prudent to wait awhile for them, and to postpone the final decision to July 1st: but, that this might occasion as little delay as possible, a committee was appointed [on June 11, 1776] to



prepare a Declaration of Independence. The committee were John Adams, Dr. Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston, and myself. Committees were also appointed, at the same time, to prepare a plan of confederation for the colonies, and to state the terms proper to be proposed for foreign alliance. The committee for drawing the Declaration of Independence, desired me to do it. It was accordingly done, and being approved by them, I reported it to the House on Friday, the 28th of June, when it was read and ordered to lie on the table. On Monday, the 1st of July, the House resolved itself into a committee of the whole, and resumed the consideration of the original motion made by the delegates of Virginia, which, being again debated through the day, was carried in the affirmative by the votes of New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. South Carolina and Pennsylvania voted against it. Delaware had but two members present, and they were divided. The delegates from New York declared they were for it themselves, and were assured their constituents were for it; but that their instructions having been drawn near a twelvemonth before, when reconciliation was still the general object, they were enjoined by them to do nothing which should impede that object. They therefore thought themselves not justifiable in voting on either side, and asked leave to withdraw from the question;

which was given them. The committee rose and reported their resolution to the House. Mr. Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina, then requested the determination might be put off to the next day, as he believed his colleagues, though they disapproved of the resolution, would then join in it for the sake of unanimity. The ultimate question, whether the House would agree to the resolution of the committee, was accordingly postponed to the next day, [July 2, 1776] when it was again moved, and South Carolina concurred in voting for it. In the mean time, a third member had come post from the Delaware counties, and turned the vote of that colony in favor of the resolution. Members of a different sentiment attending that morning from Pennsylvania also, her vote was changed, so that the whole twelve colonies, who were authorized to vote at all, gave their voices for it; and, within a few days, [July 9] the convention of New York approved of it, and thus supplied the void occasioned by the withdrawing of her delegates from the vote.

Congress proceeded the same day [July 2, 1776] to consider the Declaration of Independence, which had been reported and laid on the table the Friday preceding, and on Monday [July 1, 1776] referred to a committee of the whole. The pusillanimous idea that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with, still haunted the minds of many. For this reason, those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England were struck



A CONFERENCE AS TO THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Thomas Jefferson, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston, the committee of the Continental Congress appointed to prepare the Declaration of Independence, assembled in Mr. Jefferson's room in the house No. 700 Market street, in June, 1776. Mr. Jefferson reading the Declaration, written by himself, to the committee.



out, lest they should give them offence. The clause too, reprobating the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa, was struck out in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wished to continue it. Our northern brethren also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures; for though their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others. The debates having taken up the greater parts of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th days of July, were, on the evening of the last, closed; the Declaration was reported by the committee, agreed to by the House, and signed by every member present, except Mr. Dickinson. As the sentiments of men are known, not only by what they receive, but what they reject also, I will state the form of the Declaration as originally reported. The parts struck out by Congress shall be distinguished by a black line drawn under them;\* and those inserted† by them shall be placed in the margin, or in a concurrent column.

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\*In this publication, the parts struck out are printed in *Italics* and inclosed in brackets.

† The parts inserted by Congress are printed herein in SMALL CAPS, and in parentheses and preceding the parts stricken out.

A DECLARATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, IN *General*  
CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with (CERTAIN) [*inherent and*] inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to

right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations [*begun at a distinguished period and*] pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to (ALTER) [*expunge*] their former systems of government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of (REPEATED) [*unremitting*] injuries and usurpations, (ALL HAVING) [*among which appears no solitary fact to contradict the uniform tenor of the rest, but all have*] in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world [*for the truth of which we pledge a faith yet unsullied by falsehood.*]

He has refused his assent to laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.



He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly [*and continually*] for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time after such dissolutions to cause others to be elected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise, the state remaining, in the mean time, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has (OBSTRUCTED) [*suffered*] the administration of justice (BY) [*totally to cease in some of these states*] refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made [*our*] judges dependant on his will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, [*by a self-assumed power*] and sent hither swarms of new officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.



He has kept among us in times of peace standing armies [*and ships of war*] without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of, and superior to, the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them by a mock trial from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us (IN MANY CASES) [ ] of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these (COLONIES) [*states*]; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here (BY DECLARING US OUT OF HIS PROTECTION AND WAGING WAR AGAINST US.)

[*withdrawing his governors, and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection.*]

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the work of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy (SCARCELY PARALLELED IN THE MOST BARBAROUS AGES AND TOTALLY) [ ] unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has (EXCITED DOMESTIC INSURRECTIONS AMONG US, AND HAS) [ ] endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions [*of existence.*]

[*He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow citizens, with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of our property.*

*He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This*

*piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.]*

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries.

A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a (FREE) [ ] people [*who mean to be free. Future ages will scarcely believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to lay a foundation so broad and so undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of freedom.*]

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend (AN UNWARRANTABLE) [a] jurisdiction over (US) [*these our states*]. We

have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here, [*no one of which could warrant so strange a pretension: that these were effected at the expense of our own blood and treasure, unassisted by the wealth or the strength of Great Britain: that in constituting indeed our several forms of government, we had adopted one common king, thereby laying a foundation for perpetual league and amity with them: but that submission to their parliament was no part of our constitution, nor ever in idea, if history may be credited: and,*] we (HAVE) [ ] appealed to their native justice and magnanimity (AND WE HAVE CONJURED THEM BY) [*as well as to*] the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which (WOULD INEVITABLY) [*were likely to*] interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity, (WE MUST THEREFORE) [*and when occasions have been given them, by the regular course of their laws, of removing from their councils the disturbers of our harmony, they have, by their free election, re-established them in power. At this very time too, they are permitting their chief magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common blood, but Scotch and foreign mercenaries to invade and destroy us. These facts have given the last stab to agonizing affection, and manly spirit bids us to renounce for ever these unfeeling brethren. We must endeavor to forget our former love for them, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends. We might have been a*

*free and a great people together; but a communication of grandeur and of freedom, it seems, is below their dignity. Be it so, since they will have it. The road to happiness and to glory is open to us too. We will tread it apart from them, and]* acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our [*eternal*] separation (AND HOLD THEM AS WE HOLD THE REST OF MANKIND, ENEMIES IN WAR, IN PEACE FRIENDS.) [ ]!

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, do in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these [*states reject and renounce all allegiance and subjection to the kings of Great Britain and all others who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; we utterly dissolve all political connection which may heretofore have subsisted between us and the people or parliament of Great Britain: and finally we do assert and declare these colonies to be free*

We therefore the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, appealing to the supreme judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state

*and independent states,]* and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

The declaration thus signed on the 4th, [of July, 1776] on paper, was engrossed on parchment, and signed again on the 2nd of August.

[Some erroneous statements of the proceedings on the Declaration of Independence having got before the public in latter times, Mr. Samuel A. Wells asked explanations of me, which are given in my letter to him of May 12, '19, before and now again referred to. I took notes in my place while these things were going on, and at their close wrote them out in form and with correctness, and from 1

to 7 of the two preceding sheets, are the originals then written; as the two following are of the earlier debates on the Confederation, which I took in like manner.\*]

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Mr. Jefferson's letter to Mr. Wells was as follows:

LETTER TO SAMUEL A. WELLS, ESQ.

MONTICELLO, May 12, 1819.

SIR,

An absence of some time, at an occasional and distant residence, must apologize for the delay in acknowledging the receipt of your favor of April 12th; and candor obliges me to add, that it has been somewhat extended by an aversion to writing, as well as to calls on my memory for facts so much obliterated from it by time, as to lessen my own confidence in the traces which seem to remain. One of the enquiries in your letter, however, may be answered without an appeal to the memory. It is that respecting the question, Whether committees of correspondence originated in Virginia, or Massachusetts? on which you suppose me to have claimed it for Virginia; but certainly I have never made such a claim. The idea, I suppose, has been taken up from what is said in Wirt's history of Mr. Henry, page 87, and from an inexact attention to its precise terms. It is there said,

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[\* The above note of the author is on a slip of paper, pasted in at the end of the Declaration. Here is also sewed into the MS. a slip of newspaper containing, under the head 'Declaration of Independence,' a letter from Thomas M'Kean to Messrs. William M'Corkle & Son, dated 'Philadelphia, June 16, 1817.' This letter is to be found in the Port Folio, Sept. 1817, p. 249.—T. J. R.]



‘This House [of Burgesses, of Virginia] had the merit of originating that powerful engine of resistance, corresponding committees *between the legislatures of the different colonies.*’ That the fact, as here expressed, is true, your letter bears witness, when it says, that the resolutions of Virginia, for this purpose, were transmitted to the speakers of the different assemblies, and by that of Massachusetts was laid, at the next session, before that body, who appointed a committee for the specified object: adding, ‘Thus, in Massachusetts, there were two committees of correspondence, one chosen by the people, the other appointed by the House of Assembly; in the former, Massachusetts preceded Virginia; in the latter, Virginia preceded Massachusetts.’ To the origination of committees for the interior correspondence between the counties and towns of a state, I know of no claim on the part of Virginia; and certainly none was ever made by myself. I perceive, however, one error, into which memory had led me. Our committee for national correspondence was appointed in March, ’73, and I well remember, that going to Williamsburg in the month of June following, Peyton Randolph, our chairman, told me that messengers bearing despatches between the two states had crossed each other by the way, that of Virginia carrying our propositions for a committee of national correspondence, and that of Massachusetts, bringing, as my memory suggested, a similar proposition. But here I



must have misremembered; and the resolutions brought us from Massachusetts were probably those you mention of the town-meeting of Boston, on the motion of Mr. Samuel Adams, appointing a committee 'to state the rights of the colonists, and of that province in particular, and the infringements of them; to communicate them to the several towns, as the sense of the town of Boston, and to request, of each town, a free communication of its sentiments on this subject.' I suppose, therefore, that these resolutions were not received, as you think, while the House of Burgesses was in session in March, 1773, but a few days after we rose, and were probably what was sent by the messenger, who crossed ours by the way. They may, however, have been still different. I must, therefore, have been mistaken in supposing, and stating to Mr. Wirt, that the proposition of a committee for national correspondence was nearly simultaneous in Virginia and Massachusetts.

A similar misapprehension of another passage in Mr. Wirt's book, for which I am also quoted, has produced a similar reclamation on the part of Massachusetts, by some of her most distinguished and estimable citizens. I had been applied to by Mr. Wirt, for such facts respecting Mr. Henry, as my intimacy with him and participation in the transactions of the day, might have placed within my knowledge. I accordingly committed them to paper; and Virginia being the theatre of his action, was the only

subject within my contemplation. While speaking of him, of the resolutions and measures here, in which he had the acknowledged lead, I used the expression that 'Mr. Henry certainly gave the first impulse to the ball of revolution.' [Wirt, page 41.] The expression is indeed general, and in all its extension would comprehend all the sister states; but indulgent construction would restrain it, as was really meant, to the subject matter under contemplation, which was Virginia alone; according to the rule of the lawyers, and a fair canon of general criticism, that every expression should be construed *secundum subjectam materiam*. Where the first attack was made, there must have been of course, the first act of resistance, and that was in Massachusetts. Our first overt act of war, was Mr. Henry's embodying a force of militia from several counties, regularly armed and organized, marching them in military array, and making reprisal on the King's treasury at the seat of government, for the public powder taken away by his Governor. This was on the last days of April, 1775. Your formal battle of Lexington was ten or twelve days before that, and greatly overshadowed in importance, as it preceded in time, our little affray, which merely amounted to a levying of arms against the King; and very possibly, you had had military affrays before the regular battle of Lexington.

These explanations will, I hope, assure you, Sir, that so far as either facts or opinions have been truly quoted

from me, they have never been meant to intercept the just fame of Massachusetts, for the promptitude and perseverance of her early resistance. We willingly cede to her the laud of having been (although not exclusively) 'the cradle of sound principles,' and, if some of us believe she has deflected from them in her course, we retain full confidence in her ultimate return to them.

I will now proceed to your quotation from Mr. Galloway's statement of what passed in Congress, on their Declaration of Independence; in which statement there is not one word of truth, and where bearing some resemblance to truth, it is an entire perversion of it. I do not charge this on Mr. Galloway himself; his desertion having taken place long before these measures, he doubtless received his information from some of the loyal friends whom he left behind him. But as yourself, as well as others, appear embarrassed by inconsistent accounts of the proceedings on that memorable occasion, and as those who have endeavored to restore the truth, have themselves committed some errors, I will give you some extracts from a written document on that subject; for the truth of which, I pledge myself to heaven and earth; having, while the question of Independence was under consideration before Congress, taken written notes, in my seat, of what was passing, and reduced them to form on the final conclusion. I have now before me that paper, from which the following are extracts. 'Friday, June 7th,

1776. The delegates from Virginia moved, in obedience to instructions from their constituents, that the Congress should declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; that measures should be immediately taken for procuring the assistance of foreign powers, and a Confederation be formed to bind the colonies more closely together. The House being obliged to attend at that time to some other business, the proposition was referred to the next day, when the members were ordered to attend punctually at ten o'clock. Saturday, June 8th. They proceeded to take it into consideration, and referred it to a committee of the whole, into which they immediately resolved themselves, and passed that day and Monday, the 10th, in debating on the subject.

'It appearing, in the course of these debates, that the colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina, were not yet matured for falling from the parent stem, but that they were fast advancing to that state, it was thought most prudent to wait a while for them, and to postpone the final decision to July 1st. But, that this might occasion as little delay as possible, a Committee was appointed\* to

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\* "Appointed"—elected by Congress by ballot. Mr. Jefferson, with characteristic modesty, neglects to state that he was the first man elected, and by a unanimous vote.

prepare a Declaration of Independence. The Committee were John Adams, Dr. Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston, and myself. This was reported to the House on Friday the 28th of June, when it was read and ordered to lie on the table. On Monday, the 1st of July, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole, and resumed the consideration of the original motion made by the delegates of Virginia, which, being again debated through the day, was carried in the affirmative by the votes of New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. South Carolina and Pennsylvania voted against it. Delaware had but two members present, and they were divided. The delegates from New York declared they were for it themselves, and were assured their constituents were for it; but that their instructions having been drawn near a twelvemonth before, when reconciliation was still the general object, they were enjoined by them, to do nothing which should impede that object. They, therefore, thought themselves not justifiable in voting on either side, and asked leave to withdraw from the question, which was given them. The Committee rose, and reported their resolution to the House. Mr. Rutledge, of South Carolina, then requested the determination might be put off to the next day, as he believed his colleagues, though they disapproved of the resolution, would then join in it for the sake of unanimity.

The ultimate question, whether the House would agree to the resolution of the Committee, was accordingly postponed to the next day, when it was again moved, and South Carolina concurred in voting for it. In the mean time, a third member had come post from the Delaware counties, and turned the vote of that colony in favor of the resolution. Members of a different sentiment attending that morning from Pennsylvania also, her vote was changed; so that the whole twelve colonies, who were authorized to vote at all, gave their votes for it; and within a few days [July 9th] the convention of New York approved of it, and thus supplied the void occasioned by the withdrawing of their delegates from the vote.' [Be careful to observe, that this vacillation and vote were on the original motion of the 7th of June, by the Virginia delegates, that Congress should declare the colonies independent.] 'Congress proceeded, the same day, to consider the Declaration of Independence, which had been reported and laid on the table the Friday preceding, and on Monday referred to a Committee of the whole. The pusillanimous idea, that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with, still haunted the minds of many. For this reason, those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England were struck out, lest they should give them offence. The debates having taken up the greater parts of the second, third, and fourth days of July, were, in the

evening of the last, closed: the Declaration was reported by the Committee, agreed to by the House, and signed by every member present except Mr. Dickinson.' So far my notes.

Governor M'Kean, in his letter to M'Corkle of July 16th, 1817, has thrown some lights on the transactions of that day: but, trusting to his memory chiefly, at an age when our memories are not to be trusted, he has confounded two questions, and ascribed proceedings to one which belonged to the other. These two questions were, 1st, the Virginia motion of June the 7th, to declare Independence; and 2nd, the actual Declaration, its matter and form. Thus he states the question on the Declaration itself, as decided on the 1st of July; but it was the Virginia motion which was voted on that day in committee of the whole; South Carolina, as well as Pennsylvania, then voting against it. But the ultimate decision in *the House*, on the report of the Committee, being, by request, postponed to the next morning, all the states voted for it, except New York, whose vote was delayed for the reason before stated. It was not till the 2nd of July, that the Declaration itself was taken up; nor till the 4th, that it was decided, and it was signed by every member present, except Mr. Dickinson.

The subsequent signatures of members who were not then present, and some of them not yet in office, is easily explained, if we observe who they were; to wit, that they



were of New York and Pennsylvania. New York did not sign till the 15th, because it was not till the 9th, (five days after the general signature,) that their Convention authorized them to do so. The Convention of Pennsylvania, learning that it had been signed by a majority only of their delegates, named a new delegation on the 20th, leaving out Mr. Dickinson, who had refused to sign, Willing and Humphreys, who had withdrawn, reappointing the three members who had signed, Morris, who had not been present, and five new ones, to wit, Rush, Clymer, Smith, Taylor, and Ross: and Morris and the five new members were permitted to sign, because it manifested the assent of their full delegation, and the express will of their Convention, which might have been doubted on the former signature of a minority only. Why the signature of Thornton, of New Hampshire, was permitted so late as the 4th of November, I cannot now say; but undoubtedly for some particular reason, which we should find to have been good, had it been expressed. These were the only post-signers, and you see, sir, that there were solid reasons for receiving those of New York and Pennsylvania, and that this circumstance in no wise affects the faith of this Declaratory Charter of our rights, and of the rights of man.

With a view to correct errors of fact before they become inveterate by repetition, I have stated what I find



essentially material in my papers, but with that brevity which the labor of writing constrains me to use. . . .

With the assurances of my great respect.

TH: JEFFERSON.

P. S. August 6th, 1822. Since the date of this letter, to wit, this day, August 6, '22, I have received the new publication of the Secret Journals of Congress, wherein is stated a resolution of July 19th, 1776, that the Declaration passed on the 4th, be fairly engrossed on parchment, and when engrossed, be signed by every member; and another of August 2nd, that being engrossed and compared at the table, it was signed by the members; that is to say, the copy engrossed on parchment (for durability) was signed by the members, after being compared at the table with the original one signed on paper, as before stated. I add this P. S. to the copy of my letter to Mr. Wells, to prevent confounding the signature of the original with that of the copy engrossed on parchment.

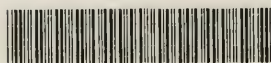








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